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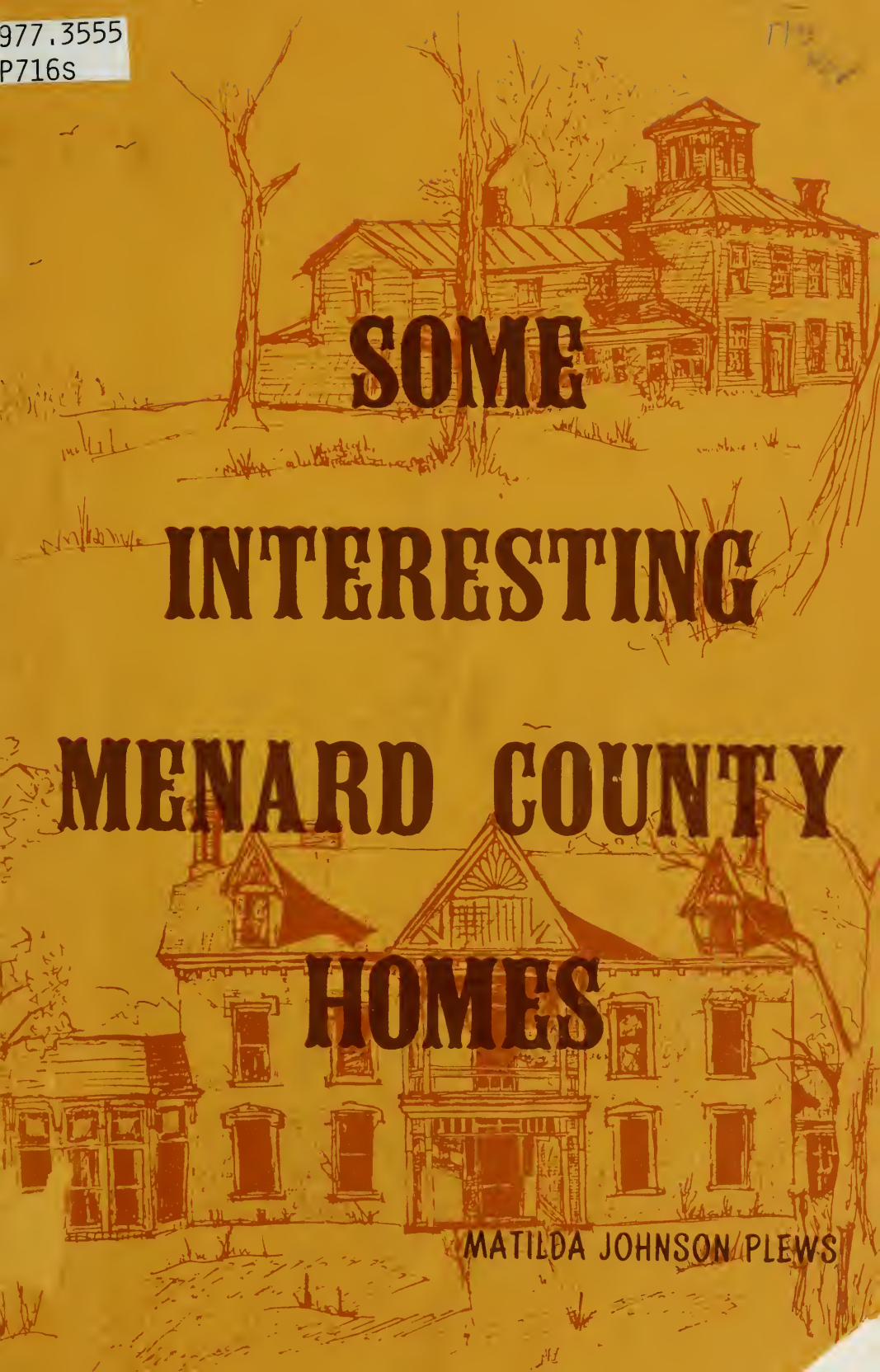
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Some Interesting Menard County
Homes.

by Matilda Johnson Plews. (1967)

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY.

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SOME INTERESTING

MENARD COUNTY HOMES

MATILDA JOHNSON PLEWS

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
HISTORICAL SURVEY

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SOME INTERESTING
MENARD COUNTY
HOMES

by

Matilda Johnson Plews

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Foreword

My greatest joy in the preparation of this booklet has been time which I have spent listening to the gracious and kind people who were able to give me facts regarding many of the old homes and their occupants. In many instances my information has been wholly dependent upon the memory of some of these residents.

One discovers while driving through the county, all sorts of delightful old houses. I only wish that it had been possible for me to do research of them all.

One regrets the passing of many landmarks of the county. Fearful lest most contacts with the past would be impossible in a very few years, I undertook the task of gathering all of the information possible for this booklet. The labor involved in compiling it has not been without its compensations, the research having been both interesting and enjoyable.

I am indebted to the excellent memory of my good friend, the late J. Colby Beekman, for much of the information regarding many of the old homes.

I am also grateful to Barry Kiel, a student at McCormick Seminary in Chicago, who sketched the pictures on the front cover.

I wish to express warm and heartfelt thanks to the many kind people, whose responses to requests for information were prompt and gracious.

This booklet is dedicated to my sister Ruth, my severest critic, since only through her insistence and encouragement, did it become a reality.

Matilda Johnson Plews
Petersburg, Illinois

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Antle House

Dr. Francis P. Antle, who had the honor of being elected in 1882 as the first mayor of Petersburg, was the builder of this large square brick house which is located at the corner of Antle Street and 7th Street in Petersburg. This house had nine large rooms with large halls running the length of the house upstairs and downstairs. The original portico was removed and a modern porch was built in later years on the front of this house.

Dr. Antle was the son of Michael and Mary Ann Buchanan Antle and was born near Jacksonville, Illinois in 1824 on his father's farm. His mother was a cousin of President James Buchanan, the Buchanan family coming originally from Scotland, arriving in America in 1630.

Dr. Antle taught school for four years, and at the age of 24 years, began the study of medicine in Cincinnati, Ohio. He later established a drug store at Williamsville in Sangamon county where he also engaged in the practice of medicine. He later returned to Cincinnati for additional courses and lectures, after which he came to Petersburg to practice medicine.

Dr. Antle was married in 1858 to Miss Dorcas Ann Mosteller of Rock Creek. They were the parents of four children, Iona, who married Charles C. Frackelton, Thomas Powell Antle who married Anna M. Smoot, who was the daughter of William Smoot, Hattie and Ella who died in childhood of diphtheria. Dr. Francis P. Antle had only one grandchild, William Smoot Antle, who was the son of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Powell Antle.

Dr. and Mrs. Francis P. Antle united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which at that time had no church home, holding their Sunday School, prayer meetings and preaching services in the court house. Mrs. Antle was determined that the congregation have a church home, and worked tirelessly with the congregation until the church (now the Baptist Church) was built. Much credit was given to her that the venture was successful. Mrs. Antle also allowed members of the newly organized Episcopal Church Sunday School class which was organized in 1867, to use her home as a meeting place. The present Episcopal Church was built in 1873 on land donated by Mrs. Thomas L. Harris.

Dr. Antle died in 1890 and Mrs. Antle in 1895.

At one time this house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Collier. Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Shipley and family moved in from their farm north of Petersburg and lived here for a time. The house was later sold to Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Willis, parents of B. E. Willis.

When the Willis family moved to Missouri, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Jiskra, who lived there until their deaths, which occurred two days apart.



Aylesworth House

One of the landmarks of Athens is this attractive eight-room house, located on West Jackson street. Sturdily built of brick, the interior walls are 13 inches thick. Ezra Aylesworth and his wife Melinda bought the land where this house stands and started its construction in 1860. Shortly after its completion, Mr. Aylesworth died, leaving the house to his wife. Mrs. Aylesworth died soon thereafter, and the house was willed to their son, Barton Aylesworth, a minor.

In 1874 the thirteen-room house was purchased by Alexander Hale. Alexander Hale at one time owned and operated a saw mill, which was located where the Athens Methodist Church parsonage now stands. At that time Mr. Hale owned hundreds of acres of timber land. Mr. Hale was also in the milling business. In 1856 Alexander Hale and John Overstreet built a brick steam grist mill at a cost of \$11,000 and began operating the mill in 1857.

Alexander Hale married Elvira Lemmon. They were the parents of twelve children: Edmund, Matthew, Daniel, Nyra Luna (Mrs. George Boyd), Anna Mae (Mrs. Charles Evans), Cynthia (Mrs. John Culver), Lela (Mrs. Colonel Holli-day), Lola (Mrs. Theo. Kucher), Susan (Mrs. George Hunt), Elizabeth, Margaret (Mrs. Chas. Pierce), and Alexander who died in childhood.

In 1920, the house became the property of their daughter, Lola Hale Kucher, who moved back to Athens following the death of her husband, and remodeled the old home. The five room frame structure to the west was removed, and additional changes were made in the interior.

Two of Alexander and Elvira Hale's grandchildren are now living in Athens: Julian Hale Boyd and Mrs. George Streckfuss. J. Hale Boyd is the son of Nyra Luna Hale and M. George Boyd. His wife is the former Hathaway Bennett. Mrs. Elizabeth Streckfuss is the daughter of Cynthia Hale and John Culver.

In 1937, Mrs. Kucher returned to her former home in Peoria, selling the home to Mr. and Mrs. James B. Primm. Mrs. Primm was the former Margaret England. The Primms had three daughters, Lucille, Vida and Eugenia, who married Henry Miller. Today the house is owned and occupied by Misses Lucille and Vida Primm.



Photo of House when occupied by Hale Family

John Bennett House

Overlooking the city of Petersburg from its wide lawn, and shaded by large trees, stands the house which was built by John Bennett, one of the leading citizens of the community. This beautiful old home with its Victorian porch on the east, has been changed very little throughout the years. This house has a very fine walnut spool staircase, two glass enclosed porches and eight large rooms. While this house was under construction, Lincoln is said to have made a speech here, using a part of the foundation as a platform.

John Bennett was the eldest son of Richard E. and Ann Carter Bennett. He was born in 1805 in Halifax county, Virginia. His boyhood was spent in Virginia and as he grew older he clerked in his father's store. After his father's death he continued to run the business until 1835 when he removed to Rochester in Sangamon county. Here he stayed for one year when he removed to Petersburg where he purchased a drygoods establishment from John Taylor. This store, the first store established in Petersburg, was opened in 1833 by John Taylor. John Bennett also built the Menard House, which stood on the east side of the square where the R.E.A. building now stands, which he ran for several years, and after selling the Menard House he returned to the merchandising business. He continued in this business until 1858 when he retired, his son Thomas Bennett, taking over the business.

John Bennett was a brother of Dr. Richard Bennett and William Bennett.

John Bennett served one term in the State Legislature in 1840-1841, having been elected to that place as an Old Line Whig. He had the honor of being the first Representative to the General Assembly from the new county of Menard. He assisted in the organization of Clinton Lodge No. 19 A.F. & A.M. at Petersburg in 1842. He served as Worshipful Master for 15 years. Clinton Lodge was named in honor of Gov. DeWitt Clinton of New York. He was also District Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. Mr. Bennett was one of the original directors of the Tonica & Petersburg Railroad (now G. M. & O.).

John Bennett was married to Miss Mary Amistead Boyd, daughter of Alexander and Matilda Boyd. They were the parents of ten children: John, Thomas, Harry, Anna E., Mary M., and five children who died in childhood. Mr. Bennett's first wife died in 1849, and in 1850 he was married to Miss Mary Cabanis, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Z. P. Cabanis. Dr. and Mrs. Cabanis are buried in the old City Cemetery in the southeast corner of Petersburg.

The house was occupied for a time by Mr. and Mrs. T. W. McNeely while their home on the south hill was being built. It was also occupied for a time by Capt. and Mrs. W. H. Weaver and family.

For many years the home was owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Whipp and family: Ellis (married Jessie Weaver), Leslie (married Myrtle Blane), Ora (Edwin Waterbury), Nell (Paul Watson) and Virgil (Allie McMichael). Following the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Whipp, their son Virgil and wife and two daughters Virginia and Dorothy occupied the home.

Today the home is owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. William Menichetti.



313 North 9th Street, Petersburg

Dr. Richard Bennett Home

Dr. Richard Everard Bennett was born in Halifax, Virginia in 1807, and came to Illinois in 1835, settling at Rochester. In 1836 he came to New Salem and the latter part of 1836 moved to Petersburg with his family. Dr. Bennett had the distinction of being Petersburg's first resident physician.

This house was built by Dr. Bennett in the 1840's. The original two-story brick structure had four large rooms, two rooms and a large hall downstairs, and two upstairs, with a winding walnut stairway. Each of the original rooms has a fireplace. Three rooms of frame construction were added later. The house faced the north as it does now, however the original house had no porch. Old pictures of the house show the old Bennett Inn which was owned by Dr. Bennett and stood just east of his house. The Inn faced east and was previously owned by Peter Lukins, for whom the city of Petersburg was named. This was the first inn ever kept in Petersburg. Its roof sheltered many men who afterward became famous: Lincoln, Douglas, McDougall, Hardin, Herndon, Ferguson, Stuart, and other noted lawyers who stopped here when attending court.

Dr. Bennett was married to Miss Maria Carter, his first cousin, daughter of Alexander and Margaret Stevens Carter. They were the parents of ten children: Margaret Ann, Richard, Margaret B. (married David Bell), Theodorick (married Martha Jane Jenkins), Virginia (married James H. Thornton), Robert, Walter, Susannah, David and James. Theodorick and Martha Bennett had four children: William, David, Bertha, and one child who died in infancy.

Dr. Bennett was married the second time Oct. 18, 1855 to Mrs. Margaret White Phillips. She was the daughter of Aaron White. She had two sons Aaron Francis and William Jefferson Phillips by her first marriage to William C. Phillips. Aaron Francis Phillips, called Frank, is the artist who painted several pictures of New Salem which now hang in the Ralph Newman Museum in Chicago. He also made many wood carvings, carving the much talked of profile of Lincoln on the sycamore tree at New Salem. He was married to Ella Burkholder.

Dr. and Margaret Bennett were the parents of eight children: Ellnora, who married Septimus Weatherby; Mary, who married J. R. Gurrad; John, who married Barbara Farber; Richard; Margaret, who married Will Rayburn; Charles, who traveled with Shipps Circus; Richard who died in infancy; Georgiana, who married John B. Dennis. Mrs. Dennis is 93 years of age and the only living child of Dr. Bennett.

Following the second marriage of Dr. Bennett, the family moved to Sandridge, where Dr. Bennett died in 1875. Dr. Bennett is buried in the old City Cemetery in the southeast corner of Petersburg.

This house was occupied at one time by the Riseman family, who operated a store on the north side of the square.

The house was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Hueffner, who moved here from Virginia, Ill. in 1901. Mr. Hueffner, a Civil War veteran, was born in Neine Kirchen Baden, Germany in 1844. He owned and operated the Eagle Roller Mills, where the well known "Snow Patent" flour was milled. The Hueffners were the parents of eight children: Elizabeth (Boyd), Arthur, Mrs. John Leigh, Rose (Andervont), Beulah (Smith) and three children who died in infancy.

Today the house is owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Melton and their daughter Ada Marie.



106 E. Madison Street, Petersburg

Bishop House

Most happily for house and grounds, this house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Watkins in 1948, and was carefully restored. A downstairs bedroom and garage were added to the back of the house, in no way changing the lines of the house.

This beautiful red brick Georgian home was built between 1845 and 1849 by Robert Bishop, a soldier of the Mexican War. The Bishop family moved into this home after living in a log cabin which stood on the adjoining lot.

Robert Bishop was born in Portsmouth, England in 1815, and came to the United States with his parents when quite young. His father was the first to invent and put into use the cylinder for revolvers and guns, but died before they were put into general use. After spending some ten years of his early life as a whaler along the coast of Chile, Peru and Panama, he located in Petersburg and became the proprietor of a gun shop which he operated on the south side of the square, where the Menard County Mutual Fire Insurance office is now located. The following two paragraphs, reprinted from the Petersburg Observer, describe the first Bishop gunshop.

"This frame building, timbers of oak, ceiling of sycamore and weather boarding of walnut, was occupied by Abe Lincoln as a store at New Salem from 1832 to 1835. Here also he kept the post office of which he, himself, was the postmaster. In this building he studied law and mastered the intricacies of surveying without a teacher."

"About 1836 this building was bought by Robert Bishop for a gunshop and moved to this city. Mr. Lincoln assisted in the removal. Sometime later when Mr. Bishop built the brick building now occupied by his son, L. W. Bishop, on the south side of the square, the old Lincoln building was pushed to the rear."

Here the building remained until April 1906 when it was taken down and hauled to the Bishop residence. High winds finally carried off the roof, so that its demolition became necessary.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bishop were the parents of one daughter, Olive B., who married Fred Wilkinson, and two sons, Jay C. Bishop and Louis Bishop. Jay married Miss Mary Momeyer and they were the parents of one son, Robert Bishop. Louis Bishop was never married. He was associated with his father in business.

This house remained in the Bishop family until it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Watkins. The Watkins were the parents of one son, Juhl Watkins.

The staircase is of walnut, and gracing the original old walnut fireplace are two oil lamps which were originally used in a chandelier when the house was built. The interior, like the exterior, is sturdy, simple, and in excellent taste.

Standing to the west of this house is a magnificent old evergreen, which is said to have been planted when the house was built.



217 W. Sheridan, Petersburg

Bonnett Inn

Bhis old Inn, built in 1842, is all that remains of a settlement called Robinson's Mills (now known as Bobtown). This is where the stage coach stopped in days gone by.

The following excellent article describing Robinson's Mills was prepared for the writer by William Eugene Boeker of Oakford:

In 1826, Abraham Mounts built a water and horse mill on Clary's Creek below the confluence of Little Creek and Clary's Creek. He was one of the earliest settlers of this community.

During the year 1829, James Watkins settled in this area and bought the mill from Mounts, who moved to Crane Creek district and established another mill.

In 1836, A. Lincoln as deputy surveyor of Sangamon county, especially the northwest section, established a road beginning at a point near Watkins Mill, heading east by northeast through the later town of Oakford, (founded in 1872) to the town of Huron, which Lincoln had just surveyed this same year. The road crossed the Sangamon at Miller's Ferry (at Huron) and headed northeast toward Pekin.

In 1836 or 37 Ebenezer Robinson, another miller, bought the 40 acres (that the Watkins Mill was located on) from Watkins, rebuilt the mill, added a saw mill also and from that time on the community was known as Robinson's Mills. He built a double log cabin and in 1842 or 43 began the construction of the brick structure. This mill was located on the road leading from New Salem, northwest to Little Grove Creek and followed its course nearly all the way to the mill, passing the "Pecan Chapel" one mile north and headed north to the Sangamon where the Purdy McGinnis Ferry was located and from there toward Bath and Havana.

It is known that a store, mill, saloon, blacksmith, Inn and several other occupations were established here and became known as Robinson's Mills, Illinois when the post office was established there.

Robinson became a very important man of the area. In the year 1846 he was elected to the State Legislature from Menard county for one term. Some time between this time and 1870, he left Robinson's Mills and living with his daughter, Mrs. Eliley Burton of Lincoln, Ill., died February 22, 1871.

When Robinson left Robinson's Mills, John Bonnett became owner of the land of Robinson's Mills. He had been living here since 1842, having helped build the brick inn. His grandson, George Bonnett, tells that the family story handed down is that during Lincoln's politicking, he stopped several times over night at Robinson's Mills, where he met many old friends. John Bonnett was a blacksmith, coffin maker and farmer by trade. This trade was handed down through the family. When the Bonnetts came to Robinson's Mills the building was being built, the bricks being molded northwest of the house.



Bobtown Road, Oakford

After the Civil War, several residents lived in the village. In 1866 Dr. J. D. Whitley was practicing medicine here as well as postmaster until the year 1872 when he moved to Oakford and later on to Petersburg.

As soon as lots were put up for sale in Oakford, everyone left Robinson's Mills. Calvin Atterberry, the merchant, moved his stock of goods to Oakford, the saloon keeper moved, as well as Dr. Whitley. It was a matter of months that all that was left at Robinson's Mills was the old brick inn, the owner, John Bonnett, the postmaster and blacksmith by trade. Infact it disintegrated similar to New Salem, when Petersburg became the county seat.

The farm remained in the Bonnett family for years. Today it is owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Gebhards.

Ebenezer Robinson's daughter Caroline was first married to a Mr. Buckley. Her second marriage was to J. C. McDole. She was the grandmother of Mrs. Norma Bonties of Petersburg.

Branson House

Nathaniel W. Branson, builder of this house, was a native of Jacksonville, Illinois, where he was born in 1837. His father, William Branson, was born in North Carolina and his mother, June Cooledge Branson was a native of Kentucky. They lived in Jacksonville where William Branson, a furniture dealer, was at one time mayor.

N. W. Branson graduated in 1857 from Illinois College where he studied law and was admitted to the bar three years later. He came to Petersburg where he met and married Miss Frances Regnier, daughter of Dr. Francis and Ann Goldsmith Regnier. Dr. and Mrs. Regnier were former residents of New Salem and upon moving to Petersburg, lived in the house which stood north of the Library. This red brick house, built by Dr. Regnier's brother, was used for many years as the city hall.

Mr. Branson was twice elected a member of the State Legislature and in 1876 was a delegate to the National Convention in Cincinnati which nominated Hayes and Wheeler for the presidency.

This large white frame house stands at the top of what is known as "Brahm's Hill", and is located where once stood the home of Dr. and Mrs. John Allen who moved to Petersburg from New Salem. A two-storied square pillared porch extends to the roof line. Behind the imposing facade lie an equally imposing series of rooms. This house boasts eight marble fireplaces, four downstairs and four in upstairs bedrooms.

Mr. and Mrs. Branson were the parents of six children, four dying in childhood, Edward R. Branson and Miss Ella Branson, who married Dr. W. M. Craig.

Following the death of Mr. Branson, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. George Warnsing of Greenvew. They were the parents of two daughters, Laura Marie and Hermine.

The house is now owned and occupied by the Warnsings' granddaughter and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson Lewis and their three sons, Warnsing, Peter and Clark.



Clark House

Three miles north and west of Petersburg stands a stately old eleven room house, built of brick which was burned near the house. Built by a man named Clark, it was occupied by this family for a few years until the family moved to California.

South of this house on what was then the George Hudspeth farm, lived James McGrady Rutledge and his wife. When this house was sold by the Clark family it was purchased by the Rutledges' who moved into this home.

James McGrady Rutledge was the son of William and Susannah Cameron Rutledge, and was a descendant of Edward Rutledge who signed the Declaration of Independence. He was born in Henderson county, Kentucky in 1814 and at the age of twelve years he moved with his parents to the Concord community, then a wild Indian country. At that time prairie grass was so high, natives found it hard to see their cows when they stood close by. All wheat was hauled to Beardsferry (Beardstown) 40 miles away. The old Indian Shick Shack lived in this part of the country and was friendly with the early settlers. He lived with his children. Two of his children, Joe and Antewine, were playmates of James McGrady Rutledge. His wife who had died, was buried on the banks of the Sangamon River. Shick Shack died during the winter of the big snow, 1830-31. After his death the remainder of the tribe moved north to join the Black Hawk tribe.

In 1841 James M. Rutledge married Miss Margaret C. Harris. They were the parents of fourteen children, seven sons and seven daughters. Four of their children, David, Samuel, Matilda and Robert, died in childhood and are buried in the Abraham Goodpasture cemetery just south of this home. Mr. Rutledge stated before his death that this cemetery was erroneously called Old Concord cemetery. This is the same little cemetery in which Ann Rutledge, a first cousin of James M. Rutledge, was originally buried. William and Susannah Rutledge were the last persons buried in this cemetery.

Their other children were John Rutledge, who was drowned in Nebraska in 1862, Ann Eliza Rutledge (Mrs. Edward Traylor), Mary (Mrs. John Moore), James B., Thomas Harris, Lura (Mrs. Milton Comingore), Harriett (Mrs. Andrew Park), Catherine Susannah (Mrs. J. H. Clary), Harvey E., and Emma (Mrs. Henry S. Houghton).

John James Rutledge, who was an uncle to James McGrady Rutledge, owned a tavern at New Salem where Lincoln boarded. Being a frequent visitor of his uncle and family, he often shared the shack bed with Lincoln. He also was a chain carrier for Abe Lincoln when he surveyed in the settlement where they lived.

When Mr. and Mrs. Rutledge decided to retire in 1889, they moved to Petersburg where they built a home and spent the remainder of their lives. This home is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Miller and Mrs. William Ramsay.



Grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Rutledge living in Petersburg are: James Park, Miss Stella Park, Mrs. Edith Worthington and Kirby Rutledge.

The house and farm were then purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Peter Grosboll, both of whom came from Denmark. After living on a farm near Atterberry, the Grosboll family moved to this house. Mr. and Mrs. Grosboll were the parents of five children: Cyrus who married Hazel Henderson, Ella, Matha (Mrs. Edward Harms), Anna (Mrs. Harry Schirding), and Harry.

Solidly and splendidly preserved, this house which overlooks the burial ground where Lincoln often visited the grave of Ann Rutledge, remains in the Grosboll family today. It is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Kermit Grosboll, son of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Grosboll.

Jonathan Colby Home

This house, located on what is known as the Five Point Road, about 3 1/2 miles southwest of Petersburg, was built by Jonathan Colby in 1845. The two-story addition to the east and the cupola were added in 1864. This house was built about fifty feet south and about fifty feet east of where the old log cabin stood in which the family lived before this home was built.

Jonathan Colby was born near Concord, New Hampshire in 1808, arriving in Menard county in 1834. Land at that time could be purchased for \$1.25 an acre. Mr. Colby eventually became the owner of 1400 acres of land.

Jonathan Colby was married to Lydia Ingalls, a native of Connecticut, and they were the parents of the following children: William Colby, who married Elizabeth Dobbs, the daughter of Gilbert Dobbs, a Presbyterian minister; Mary Colby, who married Adam Dixon; Sarah, who married John T. Beekman; Henry, who married Mary Ellen Bone, daughter of Robert Bone; Maria, who married H. K. P. Rucker; and Grovenor Colby.

It was through the generosity of the above named Mary Colby Dixon, who in her will left money to be used for a bridge to span the Sangamon River just north of the New Salem State Park, that the present bridge was built in 1940.

Jonathan Colby died in 1885 and Lydia Colby in 1858.

Mr. and Mrs. William Colby were the parents of Alfred, Lydia, Alice and William Colby, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. John Beekman were the parents of four children, Flora Belle and Francis Ingalls, who died in infancy, Lucy Maria (who married Thomas M. Robertson), and Jonathan Colby Beekman (who married Kate Golden); Mr. and Mrs. Henry Colby were the parents of Arthur Colby (who married Laura Bates), and Nellie Colby (who married Rev. John T. Cherry). Col. and Mrs. Rucker were the parents of two children, a daughter who died in infancy and William Colby Rucker.

Today this interesting old house, which for over a century has witnessed happiness and sadness, stands vacant and forlorn. At the present time it is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Paul McCubbin.



Conant House

William Sullivan Conant was the son of Sullivan and Lydia Hemingway Conant, and was born in Massachusetts. The family moved to Springfield, Illinois, where his father worked as a cabinet maker. W. S. Conant came to Petersburg in 1849.

This house, built of red brick with white trim, was built by William S. Conant, a funeral director and furniture dealer. He was also a cabinet maker, his first shop being located on the south lot of the present high school grounds.

Later Mr. Conant and his son, James Conant, operated their business on the second floor of the building now occupied by the H. P. Satorius Furniture Store. Caskets were built in the back of the establishment by the Conants.

Wm. S. Conant purchased a tract of land east of Petersburg in 1858 which he laid out into blocks and lots, which is now Rose Hill cemetery. The cemetery was incorporated in 1859, Mr. Conant being one of the directors.

Mr. Conant died in 1887, the business being taken over by his son.

The house was then sold to Henry C. Levering, who was born in 1849, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Cave Levering. His wife was the former Julia Chatterton of Springfield. He was in the grocery and department store business with Herman Harms, under the firm name of Harms, Levering & Clary. In 1890 they erected a large building at the southwest corner of the square, which in later years was occupied by the Menard County Farm Bureau. This building was torn down when the Junior High School was built. Groceries were sold on the east side of the building, while the larger section to the west was used for the sale of drygoods, clothing, rugs, curtains, etc. This was a very fine store. Mr. Levering also owned a farm south of Petersburg, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Pierce.

They were the parents of two sons, Paul, who married Margaret Hughes of Petersburg, and Harry C. Levering.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Levering, the house was sold to Mrs. Edna Sayre and Miss Wilma Greene, but was sold when they moved to California to Dr. and Mrs. T. F. Carter, who occupied the home with their son, William Carter.

The house was later sold to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Cherry. They with their two daughters Donna and Paula resided there for several years. The house is still owned by the Cherry family.



419 So. Eighth Street, Petersburg

Conover Home

Robert Conover, who fought in the War of 1812, came to Illinois from Kentucky in 1822. He was accompanied on this trip to Illinois by his three widowed sisters, Mrs. Spears who later married John Spears, Mrs. McNeeley who married a man named Wilcox, and the third sister, Elizabeth Caldwell.

Robert Conover settled on the prairie at Clary's Grove, where he built a log cabin and planted a large grove of trees. In 1826 a new red brick house was built, the bricks used being burned in the field near the present home. When completed this was a very fine two-story home, with a walnut staircase, which remains in what is left of the old house. The house was named "Cedar Nook".

The story has been told through the years that the basement of this house was used as an underground railroad where shelter was provided for slaves traveling north.

On Christmas Day in 1824, the Clary's Grove Baptist Church was organized, the first pastor being Jacob Gum, with Robert Conover as clerk. The early meetings of this society were held for the most part alternately in the Robert Conover home or the home of his neighbor, George Spears.

Robert Conover was twice married. His first wife was Mary Spears, daughter of Mary Neely Spears and George Spears. Mrs. Conover died in 1850. Mr. Conover was later married to Sarah Ann Osburn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Enos Osburn. They were the parents of four children: Mary, who became the wife of Charles Horner, Judson, John, and Annella, who married a Rev. Rood. Mr. Conover died in 1871.

In 1881 Mrs. Conover was married to George Spears who died in 1891. Mrs. Sarah Conover Spears died in 1908. The Conovers were buried in the little family burial plot on their farm, but were later removed to Oakland cemetery near Petersburg.

One ponders the fate which has overtaken so many of the once handsome old houses. This house which at one time boasted two full stories and a veranda to the east, now stands with only the smaller section of the west end of the house remaining. When the house was changed, it was covered with stucco, which is now crumbling, showing the old bricks.

The house passed through various ownerships before it came into the possession of Mr. and Mrs. George Daniels. It is now owned by their daughter, Mrs. Loren Grider of Tallula.



Davidson House

When Peter Lukins and George Warburton, who owned 160 acres which is the present site of the city of Petersburg, became discouraged and sold out to John Taylor and Hezekiah King, the town was resurveyed by Abraham Lincoln, and the replat of the town was recorded on Feb. 22, 1836.

The following year, 1837, George A. Davidson and his brother Ishom G. Davidson built this house at the corner of Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue, then called Spring and Main Streets. George and Ishom Davidson and their brother Jackson Davidson, came to Menard county from Kentucky, and were among the first merchants of Petersburg. They first settled around Greenville, Illinois, coming to Menard county around 1834-35. Their store was located in a building which stood just north of the house now occupied by Mrs. Ollie Pillsbury, which at that time was the business district of the village. Their store is said to have been the second store in the village.

Mrs. Ishom Davidson was a sister of Rev. Springer, a Methodist circuit rider. George Davidson eventually moved to Greenview and Ishom Davidson moved to Fulton county. They were related to John Taylor, one of the original proprietors of Petersburg.

Today this house, with its thick walls, stands as sturdy as when built. Modernized and so livable is the house that one cannot help but wonder at the skill of the early builders.

This house was bought and sold several times. In 1924, it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Septimus Weatherby, one of Menard County's pioneer families. Mrs. Weatherby, the former Ellnora Bennett, was the daughter of Dr. Richard Bennett. Mr. Weatherby's family originally came from England. They came to Menard county in a covered wagon from Cape May, New Jersey in 1844, settling on a farm in the Rock Creek community. Mr. and Mrs. Weatherby were the parents of six children: Emma Dell and Francis Edward who died in infancy; Weaver, who married Anna Rhodes; Charles, who died in World War I; Emmett, who married Mattie Bates; and Mary, who married Harold Smoot.

The house was occupied for several years by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Smoot, and since the death of Mr. Smoot has been occupied by Mrs. Smoot.



George Davidson House

In 1837 George Davidson built this brick house in Petersburg. This charming, sturdy home, stands at 112 East Lincoln Ave., and is one of the first homes built after the early settlers arrived in Petersburg. George Davidson and his brother Ishom were merchants, and came to Menard county from Kentucky in 1834-35.

In 1840, Davidson was sued by Stephen Logan, who was a law partner of Lincoln, and eventually became owner of the house by a mortgage foreclosure.

The house was later owned by L. A. Whipp, and again changed hands when it was purchased by Jacob Smith in 1906.

Jacob Smith was a member of one of Petersburg's oldest families, the oldest house now standing in the city, having been built by his grandfather. He was born in Petersburg in 1855, the son of John and Jane Davis Smith. At the time of his death in 1937, he was one of the oldest master plumbers in the state of Illinois. Not only was "Jake" Smith a master plumber, but he was interested in other occupations as well. In the early years of Old Salem Chautauqua, he owned and operated a small stern-wheel steam boat, the "Minetta", which carried passengers from Chautauqua to the present site of New Salem State Park. He also used his boat to transfer parties coming by way of the Hofing Feed Yard, which was located across the river just west of Chautauqua Grounds. Many people from the south and southwest stabled their horses at the feed lot while they attended the programs. Boat trips were made as often as required for the transfer of all coming that way, at the rate of five cents each way. Capt. Smith also had a fleet of 14 row boats for rent.

Jacob Smith was at one time also interested in the circus business. Orton's Circus was the first circus to enter the state of Florida, making the trip there by horse-drawn wagons. Among the performers in this group were Mr. Smith, who was a tight rope walker, and Joseph Feagans, father of Joseph Feagans, Sr., of this city, who conducted the circus band. The circus remained there six months.

Mr. Smith was twice married. His first wife was Miss Mollie Ball. They were the parents of two sons, Harry and John. Mrs. Smith died in 1887. In 1889 he was married to Mrs. Julia Etta Thompson Sutton. They were the parents of six children: Earl, Robert Burns, Ernest, Minetta (Walker), and Bessie (Tranos). One son died in infancy.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Smith the house was occupied by their daughter and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Spyros Tranos, Mr. Tranos being owner of the Sugar Bowl Ice Cream Parlor for many years.

The house is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Engle Willis.



Dowell House

Many interesting details may be seen in this old dwelling which was built by Thomas F. Dowell in 1827. This imposing brick house, one of the first built in Menard county, stands hidden back in the field about a half mile east of the Petersburg-Atterberry blacktop road. The entrance is about four miles west of Petersburg. This house has 11 huge rooms, three fireplaces and a large veranda extends across the north side of the house.

John Dowell emigrated in the 1700's from Scotland and was one of the pioneers who broke the virgil soil of Albemarle county, Virginia. He received grants for more than 1000 acres in that section, the grants being from George the Second, King of England. John Dowell died it is believed, during the Revolutionary War. He left four sons, John, William, Ambrose and Thomas. All had large families and from them the Dowell family which came to Menard county are descendants.

Reuben Dowell migrated to Kentucky about 1813. He was married to Nancy Taylor, who was related to the Virginia Taylors and to several of the earlier presidents, including Madison and Monroe. Reuben and Nancy Taylor Dowell were the parents of Thomas Dowell.

Thomas Dowell married Anna Beck, who was related to President Buchanan. They migrated to Illinois about 1824, and settled at Little Grove where this house is located, their land costing \$1.25 per acre. They were the parents 14 children: Joseph, Reuben, Preston Boe, George W., Lewis, Sarah, Martha (Montgomery), John, Thomas, Bluford, William, Isabel, Anna Beck and Samuel. Joseph and John died in childhood, Bluford went to war and never returned, and Preston Boe went to Australia. William married Lydia Summers, a granddaughter of Jacob Bale, who purchased the Rutledge Inn at New Salem in 1841. They were the parents of three daughters, Mary Ellen (Belding), Frances May (Taylor) and Viola.

Following the death of her mother, Anna Beck Dowell lived on the farm with her father and later married Eli Reep, a Civil War veteran. The Reeps were the parents of 11 children: Frank, who died in childhood, Nancy (married Walter Gum), Thomas P. (Laura Shipp), Martha (Charles Clark), Eli (Regina Capinas), Mary (Lewis Golden), Maude (Charles Batterton), Edward (Mrs. Daisy Phillips), Homer, Ethel (Chester Gum), and one child died in infancy. This family lived with Mr. Dowell until his death when they became owners of the farm.

George Dowell married Polly Watkins, daughter of Thomas Watkins Sr., and they moved to Mason county where they lived on a farm. They had four children: Thomas Franklin, Alvin, David and Mary, who was called Mollie. Following the death of his wife, Mr. Dowell was married a second time to a Miss Reed of Mason county. Their children were: George and Joseph Dowell. Joseph died when twenty years old and George became a surgeon in Indianapolis.



When his father remarried, Thomas F. Dowell came to the Reep home to live. He lived here until his marriage to Miss Nancy Bradley. They had four children: Emery, Belle, Levi and Nona. After his wife died he was married to Miss Minnie Morris, and they were the parents of seven children: Juanita (married George Bast), Edna (Elmer Lynn), Lois (Virgil Forden), Mary (Linebaugh), Virginia (Cecil Godbey), Thomas, and Lola Mae (Arnold).

Thomas Dowell's orchard is said to have furnished the first fruit in Me-nard county.

This house and farm are now owned by Mrs. Martha Hopwood, Mrs. Hopwood using the house as a summer home.

Edmunds Springs Bath House

This house, located just east of the Sangamon River bridge, east of Petersburg, was at one time a boarding house, located near the east entrance of Old Salem Chautauqua Grounds. The old boarding house stood near a coal mine, where one may still see a fenced in area where the air shaft was located. This boarding house was leased to and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hawkins, who later became caretakers of Old Salem Chautauqua. When the Old Salem Mine burned in July 1906, the house was moved by Otto Lenz to its present location, to be used as a bath house. So severe was the mine fire, that three coal cars belonging to the C. P. & St. L. Railroad, were also burned. This mine employed 60 men.

This house replaced the old Petersburg Brewery, a large two-story brick building which was owned and operated by Wolfgang Feulner. The machine shed which was attached to this building is still standing, a small brick building which stands to the east of the house and is painted white. Three large caves were built in the steep hillside, where kegs of beer were stored and chilled. These caves are intact today and are of great interest, mutely testifying of another era. Grape vines covered the entire hillside, the grapes being used at the brewery for making wine. Only remnants of the vineyard remain today.

Following the death of his father in Germany, Otto Lenz came to America with his mother in 1880, coming directly to Petersburg. In 1884 he started a bottling plant in the old brewery building. Across the street west of this house is located a sulphur spring which Mr. Lenz decided to make use of. The mineral springs water was deodorized, carbonated, bottled in pints and splits and one quarter million bottles were sold annually throughout the entire United States. They were sold under the names Sulpho-Hygeia and Edmunds Springs Water.

Above the house to the east is located a spring, which was known as Edmunds Springs. A gazabo was built over the spring, and bleachers were built to the south of the gazabo, to care for the crowd of people who came to hear band concerts. Joseph Feagans, father of Joseph Feagans Sr. of Petersburg, brought his German Band to entertain here on Sunday afternoons.

Not only was the sulphur springs water used for medicinal purposes, but the water at Edmunds Springs was also used for that purpose. Baths were given in this house, the ailing were not only to drink the spring water but to use it for bathing also. Excerpts from an advertisement which appeared in the Petersburg Democrat in 1887 state: "Their use will affect a permanent cure of rheumatism, neuralgia, most cases of catarrh, and almost any kind of skin disease". The name of William Meyer appeared at the bottom of the advertisement.

The Petersburg Bottling Works moved into Petersburg in 1889, locating in a building which stood at the corner of Fifth and Sangamon streets.

The old hotel has been used as a residence for many years, changing owners many times. In 1960 it was purchased and restored by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Fillbright. Following Mr. Fillbright's death in 1966 it has been occupied by Mrs. Fillbright.

Today Edmunds Springs is still running, overflowing into the Sangamon River below.



Edmunds Springs

Dr. Elliott Home

In 1873, a group of Petersburg men who were indebted to a doctor for years of service, decided to pay off this indebtedness by building him a new home. This home is located at 418 North 8th street and the doctor for whom the house was built was Dr. Charles E. Elliott.

Built of brick, this fine two-story house has five rooms downstairs and four upstairs.

Dr. Elliott was born in Portage county, Ohio in 1835. In 1857 he was married to Miss Mary Ann Earl of his native county. They were the parents of one child, A. Everest Elliott. Dr. Elliott came to Petersburg in 1869, where he built up a large practice.

The house was later sold to William C. Smoot and was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Miller and their family for about thirty years.

Robert Don Leavey Miller was born in Missouri in 1838, the son of William and Agnes Mitchell Miller. Pages could be written about the capabilities of this man. To him the present generation is indebted for preserving the early history of Menard county in two books, Past and Present Menard County and History of Mason and Menard Counties. R. D. Miller was an ordained minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He organized the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, was instrumental in helping build their church, and served as their pastor for over six years. He also helped build the church at Lebanon and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Fancy Prairie, where he served as pastor for a time. Mr. Miller was an attorney, was County Superintendent of Schools of Menard county for 23 years, and taught school for 16 years.

In 1856 he was married to Miss Charlotte A. Riche in Missouri. They were the parents of seven children: Sarah, married Edward Drake; Mary A., known to her many school pupils as Miss Mollie; Emma married Harmon J. Marbold; George Mitchell, who was killed by a train in 1879 and is the subject of the book "Mitch Miller" by Edgar Lee Masters; Leyria, married Dillon Ross; Pauline married Frank Chapman; and R. D. who died in childhood. Pauline Chapman studied music in Europe, and in April of 1907, sang a concert in a new playhouse dedicated to Mozart in Berlin.

When the Miller family moved into their large new home across the street east of this house, it was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Laning.

Later the house was owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Levin Laning. Mrs. Laning was Miss Jessie Butt of Kansas City. Following the death of Mrs. Laning the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Finney.

David Bertric Finney married Miss Christine Lewis. They were the parents of four children: Richard, Arthur, David Jr., and Catherine Ann (MacDougall). David Finney, known to his countless friends as "Dave", was a 33 degree Mason, was a Past Potentate of Ansar Shrine and a Past Grand Commander of the State of Illinois. Mr. Finney's death occurred in 1957. Today the home is occupied by Mrs. Finney.



Estep House

This little white clapboard house stands close to the sidewalk at the corner of Fifth and Rutledge Streets, and many passersby fail to realize it has the distinction of being the oldest house on the present site of Petersburg. It was erected by Elijah Estep in 1826, and was located near the tread mill which was also owned and operated by Mr. Estep. The mill, which was run by horse-power, was used for sawing timber.

The claim for this site was made by his son, James Estep, who came to this community in 1820. He was later joined by his father and brother Enoch.

James Estep was born in North Carolina in 1795. He was married to Miss Abigail Teter of Virginia in 1816. James Estep and his family eventually moved to Mason county where he died in 1857. They had four sons: George, William, David and James Jr.

Of unusual interest is the fact that unlike the houses of that period, the house was not built of logs. Because of the availability of lumber from the mill upon the property, the house was constructed of sawed lumber.

The house was later occupied by James Catlett and his wife Mary Hatchett Catlett, who came here from Lexington, Kentucky. They were the parents of a daughter, Melvina, who was born in Lexington in 1843. Melvina was married to S. J. Hinman and the Hinman family became owners of the little home following the death of her parents. Mr. and Mrs. Hinman were the parents of six children: Mary (Stanley), William, James, John, Charles and Scott.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Hinman the house was owned and occupied by their son Charles Hinman and his wife Amelia Smith Hinman. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hinman were the parents of two children, Ira and Marie.

For fifty years the house was occupied by the Charles Hinman family. After Mr. Hinman's death, Mrs. Hinman continued to live in the home, but following her death in 1966, the home was sold to Arthur Reiser.



Diedrich Fisher House

This dignified home which stands at the top of a hill at 503 Sheridan Road, conceals an interior of unusual beauty. Built during the Civil War, the construction of this house was interfered with due to the lack of materials. Bricks used in this house were made in the South, and because of the difficulty in obtaining more bricks, what was to have been a full two-story house was made into a story and a half. Because of the shortages, the house was not finished until after the war. The fireplaces were of walnut, two of them having been removed in later years, one of which was made into a baptismal font and stands in St. Paul's United Church of Christ, and the other being used in the new home recently built by Mrs. John Whitaker, a great-granddaughter of John H. Schirding.

The foundation walls are built of solid rock, 18 inches thick, and of interest are the interior partitions of double thickness with frame work between the bricks to prevent dampness.

Small wonder that this house is so well constructed, since it was built by Diedrich Fisher, a contractor, who did a great deal of work in the construction of bridges, railroad bridges and public buildings in Illinois, Texas and Colorado. Mr. Fisher built many homes and business places in Petersburg.

Diedrich Fisher was married to Mrs. Minerva Wernsing in 1861. Her maiden name was Smith and she came with her parents from Kentucky when a child. She was first married to J. W. Wernsing, a leading Petersburg merchant. Mr. Wernsing died in 1858. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher had no children of their own but raised several children, among them being a niece of Mrs. Fisher, Minerva Wernsing Shepherd, who married Allen Clary, mother of Allen D. Clary and Mrs. Ella Smith of Petersburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Fisher moved to San Diego, California in 1892, where Mr. Fisher died in 1894. Mrs. Fisher continued to make her home in San Diego until her death in 1908 at the age of 86 years.

The house was then purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schirding, who with their son and Mr. Schirding's parents moved into this home. Mr. and Mrs. John H. Schirding both died in 1893.

Henry Schirding was born in Badbergen, Germany in 1833, the son of John Henry and Helena Mary Schirding. When Henry Schirding was 15 years old he came to Menard county with his parents. The family landed in New Orleans in 1848, having been three months at sea in a sailing ship. From New Orleans they came up the Mississippi River to the Illinois River, up the Illinois River to Schulte's Landing at Havana, where they disembarked, making their way overland to the vicinity of Petersburg. Soon after their arrival they settled on land north of Petersburg, where they erected a log cabin, in which the family lived for a time. Later they built a nine room red brick house, later adding two upstairs rooms. This house stood where a new home was built in recent years by a great-grandson, John Schirding.

Henry Schirding was married in 1863 to Miss Mary Christine Behman, also a native of Badbergen, Germany. They were the parents of three children: John and Emma, who died in childhood, and Harry.



In 1904, Mr. Schirding with his son Harry, established the H. H. Schirding & Son Bank in Petersburg, which was later incorporated as the Schirding State Bank.

Harry Schirding was first married to Miss Hattie Nance and they had one daughter, Hattie (Boynton). Following the death of Mrs. Schirding he was later married to Miss Anna Grosboll. They were the parents of three children: Mary (Whitaker), Margaret, and John who married Jessie Clark.

After the Schirding family built a new home on the land west of this house, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Chester Powell, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stier, who were the parents of Clarence Stier.

In 1919 the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Schmidt, who moved to Petersburg from near Athens. Here they lived with their four daughters: Betha, Louise, Emma and Kathryn, until 1944 when they moved to the house south at the foot of the hill.

The house was then sold to Harm Ahlrichs, who lived there until his death.

Dr. and Mrs. Alvin Davis purchased the home in 1954. Here they reside with their three sons: Alvin III, Paul and George. Since the Davis' purchased the home it has been enriched by additions and made more comfortable by modernizations, but it still remains an architectural and historic landmark.

David Frackelton Home

No Menard county home has greater dignity than this imposing brick edifice. It was built by David Frackelton in 1868, and has been described as a perfect example of Victorian architecture. Marble fireplaces grace the spacious rooms, and frescoed medallions adorn the ceilings. Of interest are the carved stone lintels over the windows.

David S. Frackelton was born in Dromore County Down, Ireland in 1827. At the age of 16, he and his brother Robert Frackelton, crossed the Atlantic in a sailing vessel, coming first to Springfield, then to Petersburg in 1844. David Frackelton became a clerk in the general store of W. M. Cowgill. After a time he was admitted to partnership, under the firm name of Wm. M. Cowgill & Co. At the same time his brother Robert also became a partner. After 11 years the business was taken over by the Frackelton brothers under the name of R. & D. Frackelton, and continued in connection with the banking business which was established in 1865. Robert Frackelton died in 1874.

In 1889 a new bank building was erected on the southwest corner of the square, replacing the two-story frame building which had been used as the store and bank until that time. This building was moved to a lot across the alley west, and today is owned by Harold Derry and used as an apartment house. At this time the store was disposed of and full attention was given to the banking business.

In 1856 David Frackelton was married to Miss Louise Chandler, daughter of Dr. Charles Chandler, a native of Connecticut, who came to Illinois in 1830 and settled in what is now Chandlerville, and for whom the town of Chandlerville was named.

Mr. and Mrs. Frackelton were the parents of three sons and three daughters: One daughter dying in infancy, Miss Louise Frackelton, Miss Clara Frackelton, Charles, who became president of the Bank and married Miss Iona Antle; Robert, who married Miss Constance Chandler, became president of the Chandler & Price Press Co. of Cleveland; and David, who became president of the Cleveland Trust Co. David Frackelton married Miss Caroline Roberts of Jacksonville, and they were the parents of two daughters, Mary Louise and Elizabeth. After the death of his wife he was married to Miss Fannie Pitcarin of New York City.

Miss Clara Frackelton lived in this home for many years following the death of her parents and sister. Following her death it was sold to Mrs. Hazel Keeley of Springfield, who in 1957 sold the home to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Marcussen, who with their son David and daughter Jane, and Mrs. Marcussen's mother, Mrs. Mayme Davenport, lived there until 1964.

The house is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Millard Bingham III. The Bingham's are the parents of a daughter Debbie. A son Millard IV died in 1967.

It is gratifying that the present owners have taken the greatest pains to restore the house in authentic detail, so that today the house is at its charming best.



527 W. Jackson Street, Petersburg

Robert Frackelton Home

This handsome eight-room frame house which was built by Robert Frackelton, is in an excellent state of preservation. This house is built on the block where once stood the "Petersburg Seminary", a private organization of higher learning. W. S. Bennett was the first principal, followed by D. M. Bone. The tuition was \$35 per pupil for nine months, but the Seminary was discontinued after a few years.

The facade of this house remains very much the same as when built. Located at the corner of Jackson and Twelfth streets, the house boasts a cupola, and ornamental iron trim around the roof of the front porch. The woodwork in each room is of different finish, which is of unusual interest. The house was surrounded by a cast iron fence, and for many years was the only house in the block.

Robert Frackelton was born in Dromore, County Down, Ireland in 1823. After the death of his father, he came to the United States in 1843 with his brother, David S. Frackelton. He taught school in Springfield for a short time, coming to Petersburg in 1844. After being employed in a general store, owned by Wm. M. Cowgill, he and his brother David eventually became partners in the business. The business was finally taken over by the brothers, the store operating under the name of R. & D. Frackelton. In connection with this business they began banking in 1865.

In 1847 his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Frackelton, and his sister, Miss Eliza Frackelton, came to Petersburg from Ireland to make their home. Here they lived until Mrs. Frackelton died in 1872 and Miss Eliza in 1901.

In 1871 Robert Frackelton was married to Miss Rachel H. Beers of Virginia, Illinois. Miss Beers was the daughter of Nelson and Hannah Holmes Beers and was born in 1834 in Macedon, New York. The family came in a carriage drawn by horses to Illinois, settling in Virginia. Robert Frackelton died in 1874.

Following the death of her parents, Miss Myrtilla Beers of Virginia came to Petersburg to make her home with her sister, Mrs. Frackelton. Mrs. Rachel Frackelton died in 1928. Miss Beers continued to live in this home until her death in 1932.

In 1935 the home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Krueger who have occupied the house since that time. They are the parents of five children: Jacqueline (Worthington), Roger, Bonnie Lou, Sherry Marie, and Robert Allen.



Gault House

The foundation of this house was built by a man named Fulton, but was not completed by him. For some years only the foundation stood, and it was reputed to be a "courting place", and was known as "Fulton's Folly".

Elijah Gault came to Petersburg, and started building the present home in 1865. Upon its completion he was married to Miss Lou Bergen, who was a sister of Milton Bergen, and brought his bride to live in the new home. Milton Bergen was the father of Edward Bergen and Thomas Bergen Sr. Mr. Gault was in the flour milling business, being in partnership with D. Fisher. The mill was later changed into an elevator, known as the Charter Oak Elevator.

The house was later sold by the Gaults to William Meyer, a native of Hanover, Germany. Mr. Meyer attended school in Switzerland where he learned the trade of watchmaker and jeweler. He came to Petersburg in 1857 where he established a jewelry store. Mr. Meyer was married to Miss Mary Goucher of Elkhorn, Wisconsin. They were the parents of two children, Elsie, who died in childhood, and Fred W. Meyer, who became a lawyer and married Miss Lynn Greene, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gaines Greene. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Meyer were the parents of two children, Elsie and William Meyer.

The house was then sold to Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Shipley who lived there with their son Donald and two daughters, Marjorie and Laura Jean. The Shipleys sold the house and moved to California.

In 1924 this beautiful 12-room Victorian home was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Milo Franklin Vogt. The Vogts have two sons, Milo Henderson Vogt and Stephen Berry Vogt.

Two exterior changes were made in this house by the Vogts, a cupola was removed and a large family room was built in the rear. The kitchen was also remodeled, to the extent that it has been pictured in a national magazine. Of interest are the beautiful walnut and maple marquetry parquet floors, and the fireplaces of marble. This majestic house stands as a monument to a storied past. A gazabo stands on the lawn to the south of the house.



319 South 9th Street, Petersburg

Godbey Home

At the cross roads four miles west of Greenview, stands this fine old red brick house. Built between 1830 and 1839 by Squire Russell Godbey, who came to Menard county from West Virginia in 1830, the year of the big snow. This house today stands as a fine example of workmanship.

Squire Russell Godbey was born in Montgomery county, Virginia in 1800. He was married in 1822 to Miss Elizabeth Brown. Mr. and Mrs. Godbey left Virginia in 1829 in a covered wagon, arriving at their destination near Greenview a year later. While building their log cabin, which stood on a sand hill one quarter of a mile east of this brick house, they lived in their covered wagon.

Bricks used in this house were burned in a kiln which stood across the road. The plastering was mixed with hog hair, and testifying to the results of this mixture is the fact that the original plaster is in excellent condition today. The slats were hand hewn, as were the sills. The floors are of hard oak and the woodwork of walnut. The original house was of two stories and had five rooms, however a kitchen and two upstairs rooms were added later. The rooms are large, and with the exception of the rooms which were added later, each room has a fireplace. When the house was completed, stairways led to two distinct sleeping quarters. There are four upstairs bedrooms, the south two were the "girls upstairs" and the north two the "boys upstairs", and there was no connecting door between the two sections.

The construction of this house is interesting in that it is held together by a large rod, which runs the full length of the house east and west. During a heavy wind one can feel this house sway, but at no time has any damage resulted from heavy winds. Walnut used in the house came from timber cut from the farm and window panes came from Beardstown.

West of this house stands the old brick building called the meat house. Half of the building had hand hewn flooring and half earth flooring where the meat was smoked. Close by is a frame building which was used as a loom house. Here Mrs. Godbey did all of her carding, spinning and weaving. Another building was the ice house, built with double walls, with sawdust between, where ice was stored each winter, cut from small lakes nearby. This was a self-sufficient farm home.

The original land grant was for 160 acres, however, Mr. Godbey later was the owner of 900 acres of land. Descendants are still in possession of the original parchment grant.

Mr. and Mrs. Godbey were the parents of eight children: Nancy Dickerson Godbey; Overton Brown Godbey; William Godbey; Russell Ballard Godbey;



Moses Godbey; Margaret Chapman Godbey (Ewers); Eliza Elizabeth Godbey (Wood); Mary Jane Godbey. Mrs. Elizabeth Godbey died in 1854.

Squire Russell Godbey was married the second time to Mrs. Eleanor Lanterman Carpenter, who was the widow of Illinois State Treasurer Milton Carpenter. They were the parents of two children: Virginia Ann, who married John Burrus, and John Douglas Godbey, who married Anne Belle Quaintance. Squire Russell Godbey died in 1888 and Mrs. Eleanor Godbey died in 1887.

After the death of his parents the home was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John D. Godbey. They were the parents of four daughters: Geraldine and Jennie of Greenview, Gwendolyn who married Claire Olson and lives in Long Beach, Calif., and Nina Gail who married Allen Hawley and lives in Chillicothe. Mr. and Mrs. Godbey retired from the farm in 1919 and moved to Greenview.

The brick house is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Simmering and their family. The farm land is owned by George Weimers Jr.

Mentor Graham Home

After Mentor Graham's wife Sarah died in 1869 at their home south of Petersburg, he continued to live on his farm, his son Samuel and family living with him. The following year they sold their farm and the same month Samuel Graham died leaving his wife Mary and three small children, Mary, Fred and Herbert Graham. In 1870 Mentor Graham built this red brick house of brick which he had burned at his farm, and here he lived with his daughter-in-law and her three small children. Mentor Graham taught school and cared for the little family until his daughter-in-law remarried and moved with her children to Greenview.

This sturdy house stands at 923 N. Fifth Street in Petersburg. There are three rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs. It has carried its 97 years with special grace, and one cannot but have the deepest admiration for the man who was its builder. Mentor Graham contributed fifty-two years of his life to teaching hundreds of children of Menard county.

Mentor Graham was born in Kentucky in 1800, the son of Jeremiah and Mary Graham. He started teaching in Kentucky, and was married there to Miss Sarah Rafferty. Mentor and Sarah Graham left Bush Creek, Kentucky for Illinois on Oct. 2, 1826, settling on a farm near Greene's Rocky Branch, 1/2 mile south and 1/2 mile west of the north entrance of the present State Park. At first the Grahams lived in a log cabin, but later Mr. Graham built a fine brick home, which in later years burned to the ground.

Shortly after arriving in Menard county, Mr. Graham started a subscription school. School was held in the log Baptist Church which was built in 1826 and stood about 1/2 mile south of the Graham home, on land owned by Wm. G. Greene, who was Mentor Graham's uncle. Here church was held on Sundays and school during the week. Mr. Graham also farmed and tutored children in their homes.

After New Salem became a settlement and Lincoln became a resident, Lincoln lived for six months in the Graham home, where in the evenings he would recite lessons to Mr. Graham. Mentor Graham became famous as Lincoln's teacher. He was one of Lincoln's closest friends and supporters, and because of this close friendship was invited to sit on the platform with Lincoln at his inauguration for president of the United States in Washington, D. C.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham were the parents of fifteen children: Almira (Goldsbey); Minerva (Kennedy); Elizabeth (Bell); Mary (Smith); William; Samuel and Harry, who married twin sisters, Mary and Malissa Blane; Bennett; Sempter; and six children who died in childhood.

Mr. Graham taught in many schools throughout the county, among them being New Salem, Tice, Curtis, Tick Ridge, Hog Corner, Honey Hart and Shipley.

In 1883 Mr. Graham went to Blunt, S. Dakota, where he made his home with his son Harry and family. Here the man who dedicated his life to teaching died in 1886. In 1933 his remains were brought to Farmer's Point cemetery south of Petersburg for reinterment beside his wife.



Samuel and Mary Graham's daughter Mary, married Henry Bradley of Greenview. They were the parents of one daughter, Marie Bradley, who married Elton Ennis. Mrs. Ennis is the only great-grandchild of Mentor Graham living in Menard county.

Mentor Graham sold this house in May 1881 to William Kern and his wife Melinda. William Kern was a native of Germany, and came to America when 22 years of age, coming to Petersburg soon after the Civil War. He engaged in the bakery business most of his life, his bakery being located on the south side of the square. The Kerns had six children: William, John, Frank, Henry, George and Mary, who married J. N. Ruie.

Today this house is owned and occupied by Leopold Eberhard. Mrs. Eberhard died in 1963. They were the parents of three daughters, Mary Leta, Anna Marie and Donna June.

Scott Greene Home

On North Ewing street in Tallula stands a fine old red brick house, rich in detail, which was built by Scott Greene in 1891-1892. This house was designed and constructed by Elliott of Jacksonville at a cost of \$20,000. Beautifully landscaped, the yard is of special interest because of the unusual trees. Of the ten rooms in the house, eight have fireplaces.

Said to have been the greatest social event in the history of Tallula, was the "house warming" of this home on March 6, 1892. Forty couples were present. Music for dancing was furnished by Jeffries Orchestra of Jacksonville and Rohlender & Howard of Jacksonville catered the supper.

Scott Greene was the son of William Graham Greene and Louisa White Greene. William G. Greene is said to have been Lincoln's closest friend, having at one time worked with Lincoln in the Offut store at New Salem. At that time Lincoln was 21 years of age and William G. Greene 18 years. He was also a close friend of Gov. Richard Yates. Mr. Greene and Dr. J. F. Willson started the Willson & Greene Bank in Tallula. The bank later became the Greene & Greene Bank, under the management of Scott Greene and his son Nelson Greene. The bank was later known as the Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Tallula. Mr. Greene was also an extensive land owner, and was at one time president of the Petersburg & Tonica railroad, which later became the C. & A. Mr. Greene in connection with J. A. Brahm in 1866 established at Petersburg the first bank in Menard county, known as the Brahm & Greene Bank. The town of Greenview was named in honor of W. G. Greene. W. G. Greene died in 1893.

Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Greene were the parents of nine children: Carlin, McNulty, Byrd, Vance, Julia, Frank, Kate (who married J. S. Noble of Seattle, Wash.), Gaines and Scott Greene.

Scott Greene married Miss Sarah Greene of Cane, Illinois. They were the parents of three children, one daughter who died in infancy, and two sons, Nelson and Jones Greene. Nelson Greene married Betty McNeely of Petersburg. Jones Greene was twice married. His first wife was Miss Ellen Rogers. Following her death he was married to Miss Velma Robinson of Tallula.

Scott Greene was a Civil War veteran, and when he died in 1933 at the age of 87 years, was the last surviving member of the Dick Johnson Post G. A. R. of Tallula.

Following the death of Mr. Greene, the house was occupied by his widow, whose hospitality will long be remembered by her Tallula friends. Mrs. Greene died in 1941.

Mrs. Josephine Jones of Springfield purchased the home following Mrs. Greene's death, where she lived until her death twenty years later.

The home then became the property of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Morris, of Springfield, the present owners, who are using it as a shelter care home.



Hamilton House

This imposing home was built in the early 1870's by Hobart Hamilton. The contractor who constructed the house was Robert Carver, who came to Menard county from the state of Virginia in 1865.

This house has ten rooms and in the large front hall a winding walnut staircase extends to the second floor. This house is spacious and cheerful.

Hobart Hamilton was born in Jericho, Vermont in 1831 and was educated at the University of Vermont at Burlington. After his graduation he came west, and in 1857 came to this community where he worked as a civil engineer on several railroads, among them being the Petersburg & Tonica (C. & A.) and the Peoria & Oquawka (C. B. & Q. R. R.)

Mr. Hamilton established the Menard County Index, which was the first newspaper in Menard county. He was a Civil War veteran, and served as County Clerk, County Surveyor and Master in Chancery of Menard county.

Mr. Hamilton was married to Miss Clara McDougall of Rome, New York in 1860. She came west with her brother, Daniel McDougall, in 1851 and taught in the first public school in Petersburg. Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were the parents of ten children, Edwin, Jennie (Hurie), William, Catherine (Webster), Samuel and John. Four children died in infancy.

Mrs. Hamilton died in 1916. After Mr. Hamilton's death in 1918, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson, and was occupied by them and their three daughters, Mary (Irwin), Martha (Hitchcock), and Margaret (Niemeier).

Later the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Don Davidson, and was occupied by them and their three children, Donald, Duncan and Susan, until the family moved to Indianapolis.

Mr. and Mrs. Milo Vogt Jr. then became owners of the house, and they with their children, Milo III, John and Cindy occupied this home until 1965, when it was sold to Dr. and Mrs. Robert Schafer who are the present owners of the house. Dr. and Mrs. Schafer are the parents of six children, Michael, Mark, Robert Jr., Mary, Regina and Ann Marie.



404 W. Washington Street, Petersburg

Judge Harrison Rooming House

At the corner of Jackson and Eighth streets stands this white two-story house, which has a charm all its own. This house originally stood on the west side of the square, it is thought where the store building belonging to Mrs. Marshall Christensen is now located. This house was erected in 1836 by Milton Harrison, and was used as a rooming house. It was moved to its present site when the new two-story brick building was erected.

Judge Milton Harrison was born south of Petersburg in 1824. He began his education in the log school house at New Salem, his teacher being Mentor Graham. He later attended Farmers Point school, the school having been erected by his father.

At one time this house was occupied by Mrs. Elizabeth Graham Bell, daughter of Mentor Graham. Here Mentor Graham lived for a time with his daughter until his removal to Blunt, So. Dakota. Elizabeth Bell was known as the town's temperance leader.

In 1907 the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Willard Henderson. Mr. Henderson was a pupil of Mentor Graham, having attended Tice school when it was taught by Graham. In 1933 when the remains of Mentor Graham were returned to this community from Blunt, So. Dakota for reinterment in Farmers Point cemetery, Mr. Henderson served as one of the casket bearers.

Willard Henderson was married to Miss Mary Berry, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Berry of Missouri. They were the parents of six children, Clara (Levanus), Lillian (Wilkinson), Beatrice, and Willi (Vogt). Two children died in childhood of diptheria. Mrs. Henderson died in 1937 and Mr. Henderson in 1939.

Following the death of her parents and husband, the house was occupied for several years by Mrs. George Wilkinson who died in 1966.

Well preserved and livable, this is one of the most interesting homes in the community. A walnut stairway leads to the second floor where one may see a portion of the original puncheon floor in the upstairs rooms.



Samuel Hill House

No house in the community has more historical value than this house which is located at 211 West Sangamon street in Petersburg. This house was built by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hill when they moved to Petersburg from New Salem in 1839. Samuel Hill was a storekeeper at New Salem, and the replica of his store stands at New Salem.

At the time this house was built, it was the only house in the entire block where it now stands, the entire block of ground being owned by the Hills'. The front of the house faced east, and a white picket fence surrounded the house.

After moving to Petersburg, Samuel Hill formed a partnership with Hardin Bale in running a woolen factory on Main street where the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Stier now stands. This factory was destroyed by fire in 1865. He also ran a general store which stood where the Samuel Blane law office is now located.

Samuel Hill was born in Hunterdon, county, New Jersey, in 1800. He came to New Salem in 1829 where he lived for ten years until his removal to Petersburg. Parthena Nance Hill, his wife, was born in Green county, Kentucky in 1816. Mr. and Mrs. Hill were the parents of one son, John, and one daughter Elizabeth, who died at the age of 8 years. John Hill moved to Georgia where he entered the milling business. Having an inventive mind, he is credited with inventing some fine milling machinery. John Hill died in Georgia and was buried there. His son, Col. John B. Hill, a retired Marine officer, resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Following the death of Mr. Hill on November 14, 1857, Mrs. Hill lived alone, and when the death of a mother occurred in the community leaving five small sons, Mrs. Hill invited the family to move into her home, where she raised the boys as her own. These children were Cissel Young, Arthur Young, Elmer Young, Eugene Young, and David Young. When Mrs. Hill's death occurred on July 1, 1898, her will stated that the house was not to be sold for a year, that the Young family was to be allowed to occupy the house rent free for that year.

Arthur, Elmer, Eugene and David Young left the community, however, Cissel Young settled in Menard county. He married Miss Lucy Flager of the Irish Grove community, and they lived in that neighborhood for nearly thirty years. Mr. Young then became custodian of New Salem State Park, and upon retiring, Mr. and Mrs. Young moved into a house on South Seventh Street in Petersburg where they spent the remainder of their lives. They were the parents of two children: Lyman, who married Alice Canterbury, and Arnola, who married Robert VanEman.

The house was later sold to Edward Fisher, who changed the exterior of the house by removing the porch on the east and building a porch to the south which remains today. Lots were sold, and now four houses stand on what was at one time the lawn.

Throughout the years this house has been bought and sold many times. It is presently owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles White and their three children, Lindley, Charles Jr., and Lora Lee.



Photo of House when occupied by Samuel Hill Family

Horner House

Whiteoaks, named for the many stately white oaks which surround the area where the house is built, stands in all its splendor at the top of the hill at the south edge of Petersburg. This fine old nine-room brick house was built in 1862 by Mrs. Robert Conover of Tallula for her daughter Mary, when she became the bride of Charles P. Horner.

Charles Horner came to Petersburg from New Jersey, and for a time operated a woolen mill which was built by Hardin Bale near the Hemp Hollow Branch.

A pond was built on this farm and was located about a mile south of the home. Here ice was cut in the winters and stored in the Horner ice house which had a capacity of 1000 tons. Cutting the ice was supervised by H. M. Levering who employed a crew of from 25 to 30 men who were able to cut and store 200 tons a day. At times men worked both day and night shifts.

Mr. and Mrs. Horner were the parents of four children: Robert, Florence, Sarah and Annela, the latter two dying in childhood. Robert Horner, who became a dentist and lived in Pekin, was first married to Miss Clara Bird of Tremont. They had two sons, Robert, who lives in Florida, and Dr. Charles Horner, who lives in Washington, D. C. Following the death of his first wife, Dr. Robert Horner was married to Mrs. Josephine Craven Chandler of Washington, D. C.

After Miss Florence Horner moved from the family home to Springfield, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Horner of Washington became occupants of the house. Several interior changes were made at that time. A room with an immense fireplace at one end, originally used as a smoke house, was made into a book bindery. Here Mrs. Josephine Horner, who is the author of six books and many magazine articles, pursued her hobby of book binding. A beautiful terraced formal garden was built, extending south of the house. Predominant were roses, interplanted with bulbs for seasonal color. Contributing to the effect was a row of poplars in the background.

The ownership of this old home which was built by a member of one of Menard county's pioneer families, remains in the same family, Dr. Charles Horner being the owner. It is occupied at the present time by Mr. and Mrs. Evan Lloyd and their son Evan Lloyd III.



Malkom Hubly Home

Dominating the countryside in the northeast corner of Menard county, stands a beautiful brick house, belonging to John Hubly. It holds a place of enjoyable distinction among the nine houses that are clustered over this farm of more than 3000 acres.

Malkom Hubly came to America from Switzerland in 1854. He was born in the Canton Schwytz in 1825 and while living in Switzerland he helped his father tend and feed cattle, which training in later life contributed much to his success. At the age of fourteen he left home, working for 40 cents a month for the first six months. After a year, he finally received a dollar a week. After working for a period of eleven years, he started his journey to the United States on Christmas Eve in 1853. Arriving in New Orleans, he at once secured passage on a steamboat for Cincinnati. Here he obtained employment on a farm in Butler county, Ohio.

In 1854 he was married to Miss Catherine Wiget, who also came from Switzerland, she and her brother crossing the ocean on the same boat with Mr. Hubly. In March 1856 they came to Illinois, arriving in Springfield. Mr. Hubly was unable to find farm work, and worked for a short time in a brick yard. In August of 1856 they came to Irish Grove in Menard county, where he farmed for six years. In 1872 they moved to Salt Creek where Mr. Hubly purchased land and started feeding cattle. Here they built and lived in a log cabin. This cabin stands today being incorporated into one of the present houses, and is located one mile west of the brick house. This house is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Shawgo.

In 1874 and 1875, the new brick home was built, the brick used in the construction being burned near the location. This house boasts ten large rooms, with woodwork of mahogany and birds eye maple. One white and two gray marble fireplaces adorn the interior, as well as ornate frescoing in the ceilings.

Malkom and Catherine Hubly were the parents of two children, Mary and Kate Hubly. Catherine Hubly died in 1887.

In 1889 Malkom Hubly was married to Gussie Anderson. They were the parents of three children: John, Frank and Bertha. Frank and Bertha died in 1899. Malkom Hubly died in 1901, and Mrs. Gussie Hubly in 1961.

For several years the farm has been owned and operated by John Hubly, who was born in this house. Mr. Hubly is extensively engaged in farming and large herds of Angus cattle are fed here each year.

John Hubly has one daughter, Dolores Hubly Lozier, who lives in Anamosa, Iowa.



William John House

Standing east of the highway on Route 97 south of Petersburg is this charming red brick house. Built around 1866 by William and Mary John, pioneer residents of Menard county, the house follows the pattern of the houses built in those days, of thick, sturdy brick walls. A beautiful walnut staircase extends to the hall and two rooms upstairs. The downstairs has four large rooms with a large brick fireplace at the end of the living room.

William and Fred John came to America from Germany, settling in the Sandridge area. Since Mr. and Mrs. William John had no children, the house was willed to his brother, Fred John. Fred John was married to Mary Jensen, and they were the parents of three children: one daughter Wilhelmina, and two children who died in infancy. Miss Wilhelmina John was married to John Henry Balster.

Mr. and Mrs. Balster bought the land to the east of this house from James L. Bale, and lived in a small house which stood to the south and east of the farm. Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. John the house became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Balster. They were the parents of eight children: Louis, who married Mary Kluckman; Emma, who married Charles Kluckman; Garrett, who married Ollie Giess; William, who married Jennie Robertson; Henry, who married Alberta Juergens; Louise, who married Henry Schaddel; and Katherine who married Maurice Doyle, and one child who died in infancy.

The Balster family lived in this house for many years. Here Mr. and Mrs. Balster spent the remaining years of their lives.

The house and farm land were then purchased by E. E. Brass, and following the death of Mr. Brass, his widow Mrs. Glenna Brass and their three children, Dwight, Ellen and Janice, moved to this house.



C. B. Laning Home

Zhorn Place, thus named by the Laning family, because of the many locust trees scattered throughout the block of ground upon which the house was erected, was built by Caleb Barrett Laning in 1875. Caleb Laning, who was the son of Jacob Laning, was a banker, and was at one time president of the First National Bank.

The house, built of red brick, with a porch extending across the east and around to the south of the house, is much as it was when built, with the exception of a solarium which was added during the ownership of the Courtwright-Brunen families. Two living rooms, a dining room, a kitchen and two halls comprise the first floor, with six bedrooms on the second floor. This house has two marble fireplaces downstairs and two of marble upstairs. The beautiful parquet floors in this house are of special interest.

Caleb Laning and his wife, Mary Harris Laning, were the parents of three children: Harris Laning, who became Admiral of the United States Fleet; Levin Laning and Maude Laning, who became the wife of General John McAuley Palmer, grandson of Gen. John M. Palmer, a former governor of Illinois and U. S. Senator. Mrs. Laning was the daughter of Major Thomas Langrell and Mary Dirickson Harris, who lived in a one-story 10-room rambling house on the hill just north of the Alton station. The Harris house burned to the ground several years ago. Thomas L. Harris served one term in the Senate and two terms in the 34th Congress of the United States, and public opinion is that only the untimely death of Major Harris kept him from becoming a candidate for president of the United States, so great was his popularity throughout the country.

This house was occupied by the Laning family until 1912 when Mr. and Mrs. Laning moved to Kansas City.

The home was then purchased by Mr. and Mrs. George Luthringer and occupied by them and their two sons, Marshall and George.

Following the death of Mr. Luthringer, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Courtwright and their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Brunen, and was occupied by the Brunens and the Courtwrights and their daughter Dorothea and son Neal. Upon their removal to a farm west of Petersburg, the house was sold to Walter Sewell.

Mr. Sewell's death occurred in 1965, and Mrs. Sewell and her daughter Lois have since occupied the home.

The Petersburg Woman's Club was organized in this home in February 1897, Mrs. C. B. Laning being the first president.



717 South 10th Street, Petersburg

Edward Laning Home

The Oaks, one of the most beautiful homes in Petersburg, holds a place of composure on the top of the hill where Sheridan Road curves to preserve the beauty of the setting. From the central hallway open large rooms, their ceilings ornamented with elaborate plaster work, their deep fireplaces framed by marble mantels. Superb carpentry is evident in the walnut carved newel post, and in the walnut woodwork and staircase which extends to the third floor.

This house was built in 1875 by Edward Laning, son of Jacob and Hannah Laning. The contractor was John Carver, who had exceptional ability as is proved by the houses he built in Petersburg.

Mr. Laning came from Zanesville, Ohio to Illinois with his parents in 1836. At that time the village of Petersburg consisted of fourteen log houses. Edward Laning attended Lombard College at Galesburg, later teaching school in Petersburg and at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He continued his law studies and was later admitted to the bar.

Mr. Laning was elected a member of the State Legislature in 1868 for two years, and a member of the Senate which he entered in 1870 for six years.

In 1869 Edward Laning was married to Miss Olivia Lane in Louisville, Kentucky. They were the parents of two children, John Lane Laning and Martha Lane Laning, who married Dr. Charles M. Smith, a local dentist. Dr. and Mrs. Smith were the parents of one daughter, Annabel Smith. Mrs. Smith died in 1902 in Colorado.

Mrs. Olivia Laning died in this home on March 15, 1897.

Edward Laning was a brother of Caleb B. Laning, whose home "Thorn Place" is mentioned in this booklet.

After building and moving to a large white frame house which stands one block east and two blocks north of this house, it was sold to Gaines Greene. The Greene family resided east of Tallula until 1898 when they moved to this house.

Gaines Greene was first married to Miss Julia Blankenship, who died in 1892. They were the parents of four children, Lynn Greene who married Fred Meyer; Julia, who married Jewett Cole; Louise, who married Dr. B. D. Epling; and William Graham Greene.

Mr. Greene was married to Miss Gelie Higgins in 1896. They were the parents of two children, Gaines, who died in infancy, and Catherine Margaret, who was married to Joe Lynd.

The house was sold some time after the death of Mr. Greene to Mr. and Mrs. M. W. Baker of Springfield, who resided there with their daughter, Miss Lucy Baker. Miss Baker married Alfred LaBarre of near Springfield.

Following the death of Mr. Baker the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Satorius, who have occupied this magnificent old home since that time, using it as a funeral home.



Edward Laning Home

As one approaches Petersburg from the east and from the south, the dignified facade of the Ross A. Nance home may be seen. This house also provides an excellent vantage point from which to view the town. From the upstairs windows one may see the winding Sangamon River over a mile away to the south. This large 14-room white frame house which stands at the corner of Ninth and Taylor Streets was built by Edward Laning. It stands very much as it did when in 1904 Mr. Laning who watched its building for two years, at last moved into the house.

A large group of carpenters worked on the house, among them being James Arnold, who worked for many years at the carpenter trade in Petersburg. Any person handling any of the lumber used in its building was required to wear clean white gloves, which were furnished by Mr. Laning. While the carpenters were working on this house, Mr. Laning took the entire group to the World's Fair in St. Louis, for a week, paying all the expenses.

The second marriage of Mr. Laning to Miss Bertha White, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac White, occurred while he lived here, the death of the first Mrs. Laning having occurred in 1897.

Many people in the community have been privileged to view the trophy room on the third floor of this house. While a resident here Mr. Laning was the owner of a camp in the wilds of the western mountains, hiring an Indian guide to live at the camp the year around, keeping the camp in readiness for Mr. Laning's sojourn among the craggy peaks and primeval forests of Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Here Mr. Laning did most of his hunting, hiring a taxidermist in Denver to prepare the animal heads for mounting. Around fifty heads of animals are mounted on the walls, among them being reindeers, mountain lions, moose, Rocky Mountain goats, wolves, etc. All are still in an excellent state of preservation.

After living here for a time, Mr. Laning hired the same group of carpenters who built this home, to build an exact duplicate of this house on his plantation in Checotah, Oklahoma. When the new home was finished, Mr. and Mrs. Laning moved to Oklahoma, where they spent the remainder of their lives. Mr. Laning died in 1917 and Mrs. Laning in 1956.

The house was then occupied by Mr. Laning's son, John L. Laning, and his wife, the former Mabel Smoot, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John M. Smoot of this city. They were the parents of two children: Edward Lane Laning, who has gained fame as an artist not only in the United States, but in Europe as well, and a daughter, Olivia Lane Laning, who became the wife of William Kelly of Rockford.

In 1920 the house was purchased by Ross A. Nance, and was occupied by Mr. Nance, his mother, Mrs. Eva Nance and his daughter Ollie Richmond Nance. Miss Nance married Garth Edwards of Idaho, and they have two children, Garth Nance Edwards and Nancy Edwards.



John H. Marbold Home

James Meadows and Jacob Boyer were the first men to settle around the Sugar Grove precinct. They came in 1820. Shortly thereafter Mr. Meadows made a claim near Greenview and here a mill was built. It was upon this land where the mill stood that John H. Marbold built his new home.

John H. Marbold was a native of the province of Hanover, Germany. The death of his wife occurred in 1843. In 1847, Mr. Marbold sold his farm in Germany, and came with his three children to America. After living in Petersburg for three years, Mr. Marbold purchased the farm near Greenview. In 1850 plans were drawn and the contractor, Diedrich Fisher immediately started building this handsome two-story brick house.

The three children of John H. Marbold were: Henry Harmon Marbold, Mary, who married a Mr. Havighorst of Havana, and Anna, who married Milem Engle.

The death of John H. Marbold occurred in 1892.

In 1860, Henry Harmon Marbold was married to Miss Margaret Hackman, also a native of Germany. They were the parents of six children: Anna (Mrs. Henry Wernsing), Harmon, who married Emma Eugenia Miller, and Frank, who married Rosa Young, and three children who died in childhood.

In 1880 this home was completely remodeled. The facade was completely changed when a two-story portico was built on the south and dormer windows changed the roof line. A fine large conservatory and a small room were added to the west of the house and the gabled roof was pierced by built-in end chimneys.

Mr. Marbold, who was the owner of 6000 acres of land, had a wooden walk built from the village of Greenview to his home. Greenview residents recall promenading past the home and also commenting on the large orchard which extended to the north.

In 1904 Henry H. Marbold donated eight acres of land to the west edge of Greenview, to be used as a cemetery. The beautiful gate at the entrance of Elmwood cemetery, built of Bedford stone, pressed brick and granite, was built as a memorial to his wife, Margaret Hackman Marbold.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Marbold the house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Marbold. They later moved to Springfield. Mr. and Mrs. Marbold were the parents of six children.

Mr. and Mrs. Harmon Marbold were the parents of six daughters: Margaret (Mrs. Karl Ennenga), Pauline (Mrs. Monroe Heath), Anna Marie who died in childhood, Charlotte (Mrs. John Wheeler), Helen (Mrs. Dick Kebbon), and Ann (Mrs. Richard Abbott). The Harmon Marbold family lived in a majestic red brick house which stood south and east of this house. It later burned to the ground and Mr. and Mrs. Marbold moved to Petersburg.



South of Greenview, Route 29

This was a large stock and grain farm. It has been said that the Potawatami Indians annually made sugar at Sugar Grove. Perhaps this prompted Harmon Marbold as a side line to make use of the grove of maple trees on his farm. A news item in the March 1, 1907 issue of the Petersburg Observer states: "Over 1100 trees are tapped, 800 more could have been tapped had the supply of buckets not given out. The output annually is something over 3000 pounds of sugar, and 550 gallons of syrup".

The house John H. Marbold built stands vacant today. The house and farm are owned by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Miller of Greenview.

Masters House

Squire Davis Masters and his wife Lucinda Young Masters, who lived on a farm six miles north of Petersburg, gave this home to their son Hardin Wallace Masters, a young lawyer, when he was elected States Attorney of Menard county. Before Masters became a candidate for States Attorney, the family lived on a farm near Atterberry. The family moved into this little white frame house in the early 1870's. Here the family lived until 1881 when they moved to Lewistown.

Hardin Masters married Emma Jane Dexter and they were the parents of Edgar Lee Masters, Madeline Masters (Stone), Thomas Davis Masters, who was born in this house, and little Alexander, whose death occurred in this house when he was five years old.

Edgar Lee Masters was born in Garnet, Kansas in 1869. When he was 13 years old the family moved to Lewistown. Here he grew to manhood, attended Knox College, and studied law in his father's law office. He eventually went to Chicago where he practiced law and wrote the renowned Spoon River Anthology, Mitch Miller, and many other books which made him one of America's outstanding poets. As he became more engrossed in writing he gave up his law practice and moved to New York.

Edgar Lee Masters was twice married. His first wife was Miss Helen Jenkins. Three children were born to this marriage: Hardin Wallace Masters, Madeline Masters (Gebhart), and Marcia Masters (Schmid). He was married the second time to Miss Ellen Coyne. They had one son, Hilary Masters.

Edgar Lee Masters died in 1950. His remains were returned to Petersburg for burial in Oakland cemetery.

The real estate upon which this home now stands was purchased by the city of Petersburg, and by it dedicated on September 20, 1960, for the purpose of this Edgar Lee Masters Memorial. Shortly thereafter the house was moved from its original location at 528 Monroe Street, which was needed for public school purposes, to this site, restored and placed in its present condition.

Where the house is now located stood the old Harris Opera House, a two-story brick structure, erected by the Masonic fraternity in connection with the Harris Guards, at a cost of \$10,000.



Corner Jackson and Eighth Street, Petersburg

McNeely Home

Hon. Thompson Ware McNeely and his wife M. Henrietta Dirickson McNeely purchased a block of ground from Amory K. Johnson at the south edge of the city, which was covered with blackberry briars and oak trees, and built a home which they called "Edgewood" because of the wooded grove which extended just south of the block, 30 acres of which were also owned by Mr. McNeely. The house was built in 1876, the contractor being John Carver, who built many homes in this community.

Mr. McNeely came to Petersburg from Jacksonville where he was born in 1835. His father and mother were natives of Kentucky. After coming to Menard county, Mr. McNeely lived for a time with the Robert Conover family near Tallula, until his father, Robert McNeely moved to Petersburg and engaged in the mercantile business. His store was located on the west side of the square. After being employed by his father for a short time, he attended school in Peoria and Galesburg where he studied law. After being admitted to the bar he entered the law department of the University of Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1868 T. W. McNeely was elected on the Democratic ticket as a member of Congress from the Ninth Congressional District of Illinois, serving two terms in Washington, since he was reelected in 1870. It was in Washington that he became a close friend of William Jennings Bryan, who visited in the McNeely home many times.

Mrs. McNeely was the daughter of Col. and Mrs. L. L. Dirickson of Berlin, Maryland. The McNeelys' had one daughter, Miss Betty, who married Nelson Horner Greene of Tallula.

The house, a two-story white frame, has a hipped roof and is crowned by a cupola. Eight of the ten rooms in the house have fireplaces, one of which is onyx, the other seven marble, one being hand-carved and was imported from Italy by the McNeelys. The original plastering in this house is very ornate with molded cornices and ceiling medallions, differing in each room. The woodwork is of walnut, the walnut stairway extending to the third floor.

After Mr. and Mrs. McNeely moved to a smaller home, the house and adjoining land became the property of John Hurie. For many years this house stood vacant.

The house passed through various ownerships and in 1944 came into the possession of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas V. Plews, who like the original owners took delight in its handsome formality, which they were able to restore.

Dr. Plews was born in Cobourg, Ontario. After graduating from Queens University at Kingston, Ontario, he practiced medicine in Brantford, Ontario for a time, coming from there to Petersburg in 1926. Dr. Plews was a 33 Degree Mason. Since his death in 1962, the house has been occupied by Mrs. Plews and her sister, Miss Ruth Johnson.



316 West Washington Street, Petersburg

Montgomery House

This little brick house stands at the corner of Fifth and Antle streets, and was built in 1855 by Benjamin Montgomery. Little is known of this family, only that his wife was named Priscilla, and that in 1866 they sold the house to James S. Bryant. In 1886 after Mr. Montgomery's death, Mrs. Montgomery removed to Brownsville, California, with her daughter, Mrs. Jennie Smith, and died there in 1888.

The timbers, floors and walls are very substantial, and of interest is the paneled living room where each wide panel has been outlined with a tiny design, the design being stained a darker finish. The old walnut fireplace has been bricked up in recent years. The first shingles on this house were "cut shingles" of oak and walnut.

James Sims Bryant and his wife Arteceia Bryant were members of one of the oldest families of Petersburg. James Bryant was a blacksmith and wagon maker, making many of the implements used on the farms by the early settlers. The blacksmith shop stood where the Standard Oil Station is now located, and was later operated by Hardy S. Peterson. Just east of the old blacksmith shop at one time stood the old Presbyterian Church which was built in 1841, one of the main organizers of this church being Dr. John Allen. In 1881 it was purchased by the Bryants. After this church was torn down a building was erected where the Bryants made their wagons and buggies. They were built entirely and painted in this shop.

Mr. and Mrs. Bryant were the parents of four children, Samuel, Cornelius, Douglas and Lucy Anna (Lemley).

Douglas Bryant followed the blacksmith business and as Samuel Bryant grew to manhood he also associated himself with his father and became an expert mechanic. At the death of his father he became head of the thriving firm and carried on the business for many years. As he grew older the paint shop was removed to a small building west of his house.

Many people will remember the mural painted by Samuel Bryant in the Menard County Circuit Court room, which remained there for many years. He also designed and painted the Honor Roll of World War I veterans of Menard county which stands in the hall of the Menard County Court House.

Because of his knowledge of history of Petersburg and through a desire that people know more of that history, Samuel Bryant wrote several articles of historical interest which were published in the Petersburg Observer, and treasured by a great many people.

Samuel Bryant, after living in this house for nearly 60 years, moved across the street and a half block to the south to the house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Miller, where he lived with his sister, Mrs. Lemley. Here Sam Bryant died in 1925.

This home is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Loren Anderson. They are the parents of eight children, Edwin who died in 1965, Allen, Gertrude (Cooney), Myrtle (Williams), Opal (Cox), Lacona (Pierson), Edna (Brown) and Jessie (Drummond).



Martin Neff House

The first 80-acre landgrant where this house stands was obtained in 1829 by Felix G. Greene. In 1829 William Greene came into possession of the 80 acres east, and in 1836 sold 19 acres to Mentor Graham. Felix Greene later sold 40 acres to Mentor Graham.

It is believed this house was built by Martin Neff, a native of Virginia. In 1883 the family moved from this community and the farm was sold to Henry Frank Cupp, who was also a native of Virginia. The Cupp family lived here for 16 years when they moved to Ava, Illinois.

This house, which is located about three and a half miles southwest of Petersburg, is of great interest due to the fact that incorporated into the house is the old log Baptist church which was built in 1826, and was used during the week as a subscription school house. It was in this log building that Mentor Graham taught school. The church stood one half mile to the south and was moved to this location. It is a large room, and is said to be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The massive sills in this room denote its extreme age. This house has seven rooms downstairs and four upstairs.

The home was eventually sold to Rev. George Eades, who along with operating his farm, acted as a part time minister in the Tallula Baptist Church. Rev. Eades was first married to Miss Amanda Lowe. They were the parents of thirteen children: William (married Edith Derry), Mae (Zack Minor), Minnie (James Minor), Louella (Lee King and later Thos. Eades), Wolford (Mary Burkholder), Mary (Arthur Bast), Estill (Goldie Purvines), Irving (Grace Antle), Thomas, Cedric (Geraldine Bast), Thelma (William Orth) and two children who died in infancy. Mr. Eades was married the second time to Miss Amelia Hendricker. After Mr. and Mrs. Eades moved to Tallula to make their home, the home was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Irving Eades and their two daughters, Marie and Joan.

This farm was later owned by Isaac Meece, who sold the farm to Mandlebert W. Baker. The farm at that time consisted of over 300 acres.

Today this house is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred LaBarre of near Springfield and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Reimer and their two sons Kenneth and Roger and Mr. Reimer's mother, Mrs. Nettie Reimer.



Pillsbury Home

The old grist and woolen mill which was built in 1840 and owned by Hardin Bale, who later sold a half interest to Samuel Hill, was located at the corner of Main and Spring Street, (now Seventh and Lincoln Ave.) This large three-story mill burned to the ground in 1865, at a loss of \$150,000. The land where this mill stood, as well as the remainder of the block of ground, was purchased by Joseph H. Pillsbury. Two houses stood on this block, one a brick house which is now owned by Misses Opal and Zelia Power, and a frame house which was torn down many years ago. The alley which now runs north and south was not opened up until 1908. A large ditch was located on the mill quarter of this block, but was later tiled and used as a horse lot.

The Pillsbury family lived in the small brick house which stands just east of the Baptist Church, and is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Albert Doyen. Here the family lived until 1872 when they moved into their new home, a two-story white frame house which was built by Mr. Pillsbury. This house stands at the corner of Eighth and Jefferson and is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bert Kramer.

Joseph H. Pillsbury was a native of New Hampshire and was born in 1830, the son of Alpha and Margaret Caverno Pillsbury. His father died when he was a year old. He came to Menard county in 1836 with his mother where he grew to manhood. Mrs. Margaret Pillsbury was married a second time to James Goldsby, the first sheriff of Menard county.

Mr. Pillsbury became a school teacher, teaching in the first free school in Menard county. He studied law under T. L. Harris, was admitted to the bar, and was elected County Judge of Menard county for two terms. He also served as Police Magistrate, County Commissioner and Master in Chancery.

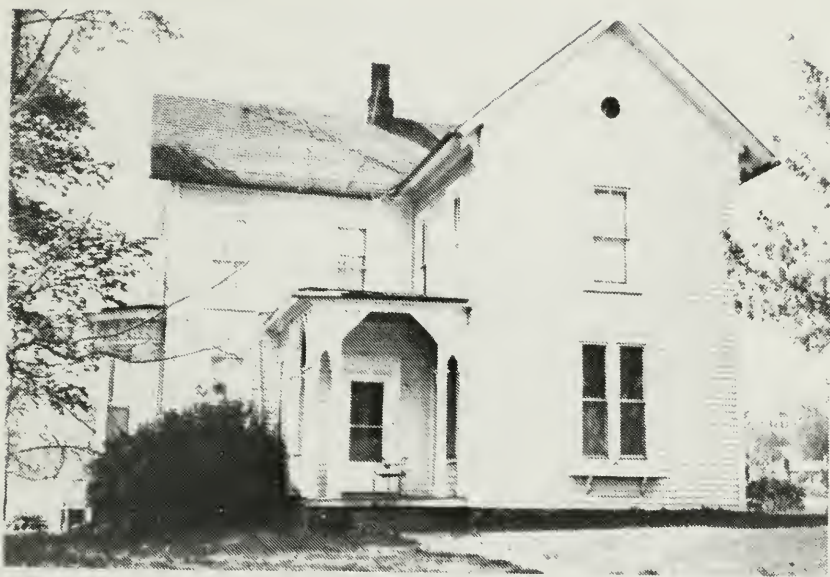
In 1861 Joseph H. Pillsbury was married to Miss Susan Morris Gardner of Springfield. Her father was Hiram Gardner, after whom Gardner Township in Sangamon county was named. They were the parents of five children: Alice, John and Mary, who died in childhood, Joseph B. and Susan.

Joseph H. Pillsbury died in 1899 and Mrs. Pillsbury in 1906.

Joseph B. Pillsbury married Miss Emma Cooper, who was a granddaughter of John Bennett who built the home which is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. William Menichetti. They were the parents of three children: George, who died in childhood, Lyman and Ross.

Lyman Pillsbury, who became County Clerk of Menard county, was married to Miss Ollie Thomson. They were the parents of Richard Adair, Glenn Thomson, Rozena Ann (Binger), Howard Cooper and Earl Lyman Pillsbury.

Ross Pillsbury married Miss Inez Bradley of Belle Plains, Kansas. They moved to Chicago where they have resided for several years. They are the parents of Donald Arthur, Mary Helen and Theodore Ross Pillsbury.



Purkapile House

James Purkapile, who was born in Greene county, Kentucky, inherited a tract of land on Route 97, about three miles south of Petersburg, from his father, John Purkapile. The deed to the original land was signed by John Quincy Adams in 1824. This eight-room house was built in 1868 by James Purkapile, the brick being burned near what is now the Horace Nance farm. The mortar and the lime came from Rock Creek, as did the large rocks used in the foundation.

James Purkapile was thrice married. His first marriage was to Miss Polly Goldsby. They had one daughter who died in childhood.

His second marriage was to Miss Annette Nance. This marriage was blessed with ten children: William R., who married Ella Carman; Frank; Sarah Jane, who first married Thomas Armstrong who died in the Civil War, and then George Weatherby; John, who was badly wounded in the Civil War; Eton, killed in the Civil War; Emma, who married Will Spears; Annette, who married Thomas Rutledge; Charles, who married Mary Ellen Stith; Elizabeth and Mariette, who died in childhood. Charles and Mary Ellen Stith were the parents of four children: Sudie Purkapile who married Horace Nance; Nina, who married Palmer Nolting; Kate and James who died in childhood.

His third marriage was to Mrs. Catherine Houghton Nance. To this marriage one daughter, Mary Ellen (known as Nell), was born. Mentor Graham was a private tutor to little Mary Ellen Purkapile.

Mary Ellen Purkapile was married to James S. Miles, a young school teacher, who taught in various schools in Menard county. Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Purkapile, Mr. and Mrs. Miles became the owners of this home. Mr. and Mrs. Miles were the parents of three children: James S. Miles Jr., Anna Catherine, and one child who died in infancy.

The porch across the front of this house was added by Mr. and Mrs. Miles, and at one time this house was one of the finest homes in the county. When the marriage of Miss Anna Catherine Miles to John Ainsworth of Mason City occurred, the reception was held here, and among the many guests who attended was Governor Len Small, who was a close friend of the Miles family.

A huge walnut tree stood in the northeast corner of the front yard. At the back of the yard stood a cider press. It was under this tree that Abraham Lincoln would stop to rest, and drink cider, served by the Purkapile family. This large tree was destroyed by a storm in later years, the walnut logs were saved, and from them canes were made, with Lincoln's profile carved on the handles. The canes were carved by Frank Phillips.

Today the house is occupied by James S. Miles and his son, James Miles III.

Time has taken its toll of this old house, yet despite its threatening dissolution, it is still one of Menard county's important landmarks.



William C. Smoot Home

This house is located on the rich rolling prairie between Petersburg and Greenview. It was built by a prosperous landowner and stockraiser, William C. Smoot nearly a century ago. Of brick construction, with arched windows and carved modillions under the eaves, this house is striking in appearance. William C. Smoot was also the owner and builder of Hotel Smoot in Petersburg, now the Hotel New Salem. He also built the two-story brick apartment building which is located just north of Hotel New Salem.

William C. Smoot was born in Kentucky in 1830, the son of Coleman and Rebecca Wright Smoot. Coleman Smoot was born in 1791 and Rebecca Smoot in 1795. In 1832 they came to Menard county and settled on the farm where this house now stands. Coleman Smoot bought this land from David Onstott who came to this community in 1825. Onstott moved from Menard county to Arkansas. The log cabin which Coleman Smoot erected stood on a knoll about one quarter mile north and west of the present house.

William Smoot married Catherine Engle, daughter of William Engle of Sugar Grove precinct. They started housekeeping in a frame house which stood east of the present house, and when the large brick house was built, this frame house was moved across the road to the west. They were the parents of seven children: Coleman; Mary, who married John W. Terhune; Charles, who married Tempe Clark; John, who married Minnie Brooks; Anna, who married Dr. Thomas Powell Antle; Edward, who married Eva Summers; and Becky, who died in childhood.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Smoot were the parents of four children: Harry, Marshall, Paul and William Clay. Mr. and Mrs. John Smoot had three children: Mabel, Harold and Catherine. Dr. and Mrs. Antle had one son: William Smoot Antle. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Smoot had two children: William and Mary.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. William Smoot, the house was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Smoot and their two children.

This house, with its spacious Victorian rooms, is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Johnston.



George Spears House

The life story of Mary Neely is of such interest, that it is small wonder that Putnam's Magazine and Harper's Weekly each published the story of her life. Like a saga of Indian days, Mary Neely and her father were captured by Indians, her father was killed and Mary remained a captive for three years before she was able to escape.

Mary Neely was born in South Carolina in 1761, the daughter of William and Margaret Neely. The Neelys were the parents of ten children. Desirous of moving his family to the state of Tennessee, Mr. Neely, accompanied by his sixteen year old daughter Mary, joined with six other pioneers, emigrating to the state of Tennessee to make preparations for the arrival of their families. Twenty other families had settled in the community. It was here that her father was killed and Mary was taken as a captive. She escaped in the state of Michigan three years later.

Mary Neely was married to George Spears, a Revolutionary soldier, in 1785. In 1824 they sold their possessions in Green county, Kentucky and came to Sangamon county (now Menard) Illinois, and settled at Clary's Grove, about three miles east of Tallula. Clary's Grove was named for John Clary, the first permanent settler in Menard county who settled there in 1819. Clary sold this farm land to Thomas Watkins, Watkins later selling the farm to George Spears. Here Mr. and Mrs. Spears built a log cabin. The country was sparsely settled at that time, friendly Indians coming every fall to hunt.

Mr. and Mrs. Spears were the parents of the following children: Hannah, who married James White, for whom White Cemetery north of Tallula is named; William Spears; Mary Spears; John Spears; Solomon Spears; David Spears; Elizabeth Spears and George Spears Jr.

In 1827, their son George Spears Jr., started burning brick on their farm for a new house. Clay for the bricks was tramped by oxen. The house was constructed a short distance from their log cabin. Upon completion, the elder George Spears and his wife Mary and the George Spears Jr. family moved into the house on New Year's Day in 1829. The rooms to the north were occupied by the elder Spears' while the rooms to the south were occupied by the younger family. Each family had separate basements.

This house was conspicuously grand in its day, being the first brick house built in Menard county and the second brick house within the territory of Sangamon, Menard, Mason, Cass and Logan counties. People traveled for miles to see this twelve room house when it was completed. This house has eight rooms downstairs, four upstairs, and two large halls. The woodwork is of walnut and the flooring blue ash. Five of the six simply carved walnut mantels remain in the house today. Interior walls are thirteen inches in thickness, and in the basement one may observe the many large straight logs used as joists. Laths are hand hewn and the plaster was mixed with hog hair.

George Spears Jr. married Maria Blankenship and they were the parents of Mary Conover Spears who married William T. Beekman; Elizabeth Spears who married George C. Spears; William Spears, known as "Fiddler Bill"; John Q. Spears; and Henry C. Spears, a Civil War veteran.

George Spears Sr. died in 1838. His widow continued to live in this house until her death in 1852 at the age of 91 years. J. Colby Beekman of Petersburg was a great-great-grandson of George and Mary Neely Spears.



Mr. and Mrs. Spears were buried in the Spears cemetery on a knoll west of the house, but were later removed to Greenwood Cemetery west of Tallula, where their remains rest on the east slope of the cemetery.

The Spears family was instrumental in organizing the Clary's Grove Church, which was one of the first churches in the county, being organized on Christmas Day in 1824. Members met in various homes in the community until the little log church was built. This congregation later built the Baptist Church in Tallula in 1871.

The cabin that the Spears family had occupied prior to moving into their new home was moved to the village of New Salem to a lot which George Spears Jr. had purchased there for \$14. He later sold the cabin to Samuel Hill of New Salem fame for \$500. After the people of New Salem moved to Petersburg and the surrounding community, the cabin was again moved and stood on a lot near the west end of Sheridan Road in Petersburg, where the home of the late Lloyd Chalcraft now stands. It was eventually purchased by Almon Hurd and moved across the road about a quarter of a mile north from the Hurd home, now the home of Mrs. H. S. Peterson, west of this city. Mrs. Peterson is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hurd.

This farm remained in the Spears family from 1824 until 1952 when it was sold to John H. Walker of Ashland. This house is now owned by the John Walker estate and is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Estel Tedder and family.

John Haley Spears House

Situated about three miles east of Tallula, is this beautiful two-story red brick home, designed in the Georgian colonial style, built by John Haley Spears in 1840.

Mr. Spears married Louisa Radford and they were the parents of seven children: John Haley Spears Jr., Joe Spears, Frank Spears, Letitia Spears, Elizabeth Spears, Mattie Spears and May Spears.

The John Haley Spears family later moved from this farm to the home which had belonged to Robert Perkins, a large frame house, located about two miles east of Tallula on Route 123, now owned by the Mrs. Lynn Greene heirs.

After Mr. and Mrs. John Haley Spears moved from this home, it was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. George C. Spears. Mrs. Spears was the former Elizabeth Spears, daughter of George Spears Esq., and was a first cousin to her husband. They were the parents of eight children: William B., who married Emma N. Purkapile; Maria Lettie, who married Carlin W. Greene; Mary and John who died in childhood; R. Yates Spears, who married Mary V. Washburn; Henrietta C., who married Charles Reding; George, married Florence Wood; and Pauline, who married Evans Watkins. It was in this house that the large double wedding of Misses Pauline and Henrietta Spears occurred.

The farm was later owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Daniels, and following their deaths has been owned and occupied by their daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kirby.

Well cared for and with an ideal setting, the beauty of this house deepens with time.



Major Stephenson Home

This charming eight-room home at 714 South Seventh street was erected by the Grand Army of the Republic and presented as a gift to the widow of Major B. F. Stephenson, in appreciation of the efforts of Major Stephenson, founder of the G.A.R. So well constructed is this house that one can scarcely realize that it was built in the 1870's.

Benjamin Franklin Stephenson was born Oct. 3, 1823 in Wayne county, Illinois, the son of James and Margaret Clinton Stephenson. The Stephensons came to Illinois from Kentucky and were the parents of eleven children. While Dr. Stephenson was yet a child the family moved to Sangamon county where Dr. Stephenson grew to manhood. He later attended Rush Medical College in Chicago.

Meanwhile the family moved to Menard county, locating in the Rock Creek community. Dr. Stephenson returned to the home of his parents, broken down in health, the result of a severe case of erysipelas, and the exertions he had put forth to finish his medical education. Here he rested for a period of a year and a half. After he improved he started practicing medicine in Petersburg in partnership with Dr. Z. P. Cabanis.

In 1855 he was married to Miss Barbara Moore of Springfield. They were the parents of three children: Mary, Carrie and B. F. Jr.

Dr. Stephenson accepted a professorship at Iowa Medical College at Keokuk in 1855 where he remained for three years, being forced to resign at that time and return to Petersburg due to illness in the family.

Union men of both political parties hastened to respond to the president's call for troops. Dr. Stephenson was among the first to offer his services and enlisted at Jacksonville. He was appointed surgeon of the 14th Illinois Infantry Volunteers. For meritorious services in the battle of Shiloh and Hatchee, Governor Yates conferred on Dr. Stephenson the rank of Major. Before this battle he had been promoted to Senior Brigade Surgeon. His enlistment expired in 1864, when he returned to Springfield to practice medicine.

In 1866 he conceived the idea of a National Soldiers Mutual Benefit Society, whose motto should be loyalty, fraternity, charity and whose name was to be the Grand Army of the Republic. The first encampment of the G.A.R. was Post No. 1 at Decatur. The second was organized in Springfield.

The first national convention was held in Indianapolis Nov. 20, 1866. At this convention the rules and regulations originated by B. F. Stephenson were adopted. Stephenson was elected Adjutant-General.

At the time of his retirement from office in the G.A.R., his health began to decline rapidly. He gave up his practice and removed with his family to Rock Creek in the fall of 1870. Here he died on August 30, 1871 at the age of 48 years. He was buried in Rock Creek cemetery but was afterwards reinterred by Estill Post No. 71 G.A.R. on the 29th day of August 1882, eleven years after his death, in Rose Hill cemetery.



A shaft, 30 feet high of Italian marble, costing \$2500 was erected at his grave by small contributions of thousands of members of the G.A.R. Over 10,000 people attended the dedication services of the monument at which Gov. Oglesby, Gen. McClernand and Gen. Connally were speakers. It is said to have been the greatest event in the history of Petersburg. A \$40,000 shaft of granite was erected in Washington, D. C. in 1909, in honor of Major Stephenson and the G.A.R. President Taft officiated at this occasion.

The Stephenson family continued to live in this house until after the death of Mrs. Stephenson and Miss Mary occurred. Miss Carrie Stephenson then moved to Peoria to make her home with her brother, Dr. B. F. Stephenson.

In 1926 the house was occupied by and later purchased by Mr. and Mrs. John Rigdon and their two daughters Betty, who married Richard Finney and Ruth Eileen, who married Clayton Ainsworth. Since Mr. Rigdon's death in 1965 the house has been occupied by Mrs. Rigdon.

Stith House

As one travels north on the blacktop road from Atterberry, one approaches the stately old home built in 1868 by Elzy Creel Stith. The Stith family lived in a log house nearby, when work was started on their new home. Bricks were burned for the house on the farm, the clay for the bricks coming from east of the present home. The kiln for burning the bricks stood west of the house near the timber.

Contractor of the house was Gaines Greene, who moved here from Mason county. He was a brother of William G. Greene of Tallula, and an uncle of Gaines Greene who lived in Petersburg.

This dignified and charming old home has eleven rooms, six of which are upstairs and five downstairs. The staircase is of walnut and the woodwork is of white pine. A large brick fireplace graces one end of the living room. This house has a hip roof which is topped by a bell tower. This bell was used to call laborers from the field.

Elzy Creel Stith was born in 1818 and his wife America Witt Stith was born in 1822. Both came to Illinois from the state of Kentucky. They were the parents of ten children: James, William, Thomas Milton, Richard, David, Elzy Creel Jr., Jenkins, Mary who married James Thomas, Kate who married Henry Spilly, and Jane who married William Davis, the latter two being the parents of Mrs. Kate Bailey. Thomas Stith and Elzy Stith married sisters, the daughters of William and Sarah Armstrong Watkins. Thomas married Laura Watkins and Elzy married Etta Watkins.

After the death of their parents, the house was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins Stith, Mrs. Stith being the former Sarah Girard. They were the parents of one child who died at birth.

Mr. and Mrs. Elzy Stith Jr. were the parents of four children: Homer, who married Imogene Thomas; Norma, who married Henry Meyer; Geraldine, who married Wymer King; and Floy, who married Elmer Page.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins Stith, the house was owned by Homer Stith. It was occupied by his son Frewert Stith and his wife the former Vera Taylor and their daughter Linda Kay Stith. Wayne Stith is also a son of Homer Stith. Wayne married Gertrude Estill Smith.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Stith, the house was sold to James Hawks, who owns it at the present time.



Talbott House

This nine-room red brick house stands at 120 W. Washington street in Petersburg. It is thought this house was built in 1861 by Boone Talbott and his wife Mary. The foundation is of stone, and walls in the house are 12 inches thick. This hipped roof house originally had no porch, the present one having been added to the house by John Rebbe. Paired modillions under the eaves were removed in recent years.

The house was later owned by Robert and Nancy McCoy Bone, early settlers of Menard county, and was sold to Jacob Seese and his wife Barbara Jane in 1889. Mr. and Mrs. Seese were the parents of five children: Charles, John, William, Ella (McCaulley), and Caroline (Feulner). Mr. Seese died in 1906, and Mrs. Seese continued to live in the house until her death in 1919.

Charles Seese and his brother John were in partnership in the hardware business in Petersburg. Charles was twice married. His first wife was Mary Alice Carman, and they had one son, Phillip Seese. Mrs. Seese died in 1883, and in 1891 Mr. Seese was married to Mary Bela, and they were the parents of six children: Beatrice (Embree), Pauline (Burns), Percy who married Thelma Buckley, Thelma (Pond), Leona (Benson), and Mary who was first married to Lawley Albert, and following his death she married Powell Staley.

In 1920 this house was purchased by John Rebbe. John Rebbe was born in 1861 in the Rebbe homestead east of Petersburg, a large frame house across the valley south of Rose Hill cemetery. He was married to Catherine Plunkett, and they settled on a farm near Bobtown. After living on this farm for several years, they sold the farm and purchased the Woodson Power farm about four miles east of Petersburg. Here they lived until they retired and moved to Petersburg. Mr. and Mrs. Rebbe were the parents of ten children: Charles, who married Carrie Dovey; Frank and Jack, who married sisters, Frank married Alma Heflin and Jack, Marguerite Heflin; Mae, who married Albert Frick; Elizabeth, who married Otto Treseler; Paul, who married Edna Draheim; Helen, who married Harvey Hudspeth; and three children who died in childhood.

Mrs. Rebbe died in June, 1929 and Mr. Rebbe in March 1941. Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Rebbe, their daughter Elizabeth became the owner. Here she and Mr. Treseler lived until his death in 1962. It is now occupied by Mrs. Treseler and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Paul Rebbe.



Tice House

Like many other houses in Petersburg, the city of hills, this house has always been one of interest to a great many people in the community. Located on North Fifth street, this ten-room gray brick house was built by John Tice in 1865. This house boasts a walnut staircase which winds past the windows against the front interior wall. Of interest are the port hole windows in two upstairs bedrooms, sliding into the wall for ventilation. This sturdy house has interior partitions of brick that are fourteen inches thick, and the basement walls are built of solid rock, eighteen inches thick. The four fireplaces have been bricked up throughout the years, and small porticos have been removed from the north and south sides of the house.

John Tice was born in 1823 in Floyd county, Virginia. His parents, Nicholas and Elizabeth Tice, emigrated to Menard county in 1831, driving across country in an ordinary road wagon. Nicholas Tice purchased farm land in the community which was later to bear his name. They settled on the land about 1/2 mile east of the Tice black top crossroads. The house stood about 1/4 mile north of the road. This farm was later purchased by Henry Balster, and after his death by his son Thomas Balster. Mrs. Nicholas Tice died in 1845 and Mr. Tice in 1856.

John Tice spent his youth and early manhood at Tice. He was a self-educated man, working on the farm in the summer and teaching school during the winter months. He was married to Miss Lydia Bowers of Rockingham county, Virginia. John Tice was an attorney, and was at one time vice president of the First National Bank of Petersburg. He also served as Menard county Assessor and Treasurer in 1857-1869, County Judge from 1873 to 1881, Deputy Surveyor and Sheriff. He was also in the real estate and loan business. Judge John Tice was a close friend of Abraham Lincoln.

The death of John Tice occurred in 1904.

This house has passed through several ownerships. It was owned for a time by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Faith and was occupied by their son Harold Faith and his wife Verda and their two children Catherine Ann and Hugh.

Today the house is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Hagler and Mr. and Mrs. Terry Wilson. It is owned by Ira Theobald.

The little hamlet of Tice, located on the old Tice farm, shows little evidence that at one time it was a thriving community. Here Peter Tice built a two-story brick building, in which he ran a grocery and general store. The upstairs was used as a meeting hall and for dances. The brick for this building was made in the brick and tile factory which stood just south of the railroad track. It was owned and operated by Arphad Snell, and was built in 1883. Mr. Snell also operated a coal mine south and west of Tice near the Sangamon River. There was also a large coal mine just west of Tice. The first Methodist church at Tice was built in 1849 on land donated by John Tice. It stood about 1/2 mile south of the black top crossroad. This church was later torn down and a new church was built in 1896, about two blocks from the store. A new school house was built directly across the road from the church in 1899. Both buildings were built by Jens Ahrenkiel. The first Tice postoffice was called Oak Ridge and was established in 1867. Mrs. Louisa Winters was made postmistress, and letters to be mailed were dropped into a slot in her kitchen door. The postoffice was later moved to the Tice railroad station. The house where the Winters lived is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. James Sampson.



Walter Turner Home

One of the oldest and most interesting houses of Menard county is the old Turner home which stands about two and one half miles north of Athens. This house was built by Walter B. Turner in 1823. Brick for this house was burned across the road from where the house now stands. This two-story brick house has ten rooms and two large halls. When completed, this house had a very fine large porch which extended across the entire front of the house. This porch has been removed and the bricks in the house painted white.

Walter B. Turner was born in Tennessee in 1802, the son of John and Hannah Turner. His parents moved from Tennessee to Ohio, then to Illinois, locating where this house is built.

Walter Turner was married to Miss Joanna Bracken of Menard county and they were the parents of eleven children, four of whom lived to adulthood. They were: Alfred, Robert, Lucinda and William.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Turner are buried in old Lebanon cemetery.

Lucinda Turner married Rev. Edmund Worth. They lived in a house a short distance west of this house. The Worths were the parents of three daughters: Louella May, who married James William (Billy) Lynn of Oakford; Belle E. (McDougall) and Delia (McDougall). The Lynns' had six children: Anna Irene (Lounsberry), Russell, Abbie Adele (Power), Letitia Mae (Gerdes), William Worth Lynn and Zeta Josephine (Terhune).

William Turner married Miss Laura Hurt and they were the parents of three children: Maude and Myrtle, who were twins, and Nina Turner who died at the age of 18 years. This family lived in this old home for many years. Miss Maude Turner married William H. Williams, and they lived in the house vacated by the Worth family when they moved to Petersburg. They were the parents of two sons, Harold and Turner Williams.

Following the death of Mr. Turner, the house was occupied by Mrs. Turner and her grandson, Turner Williams and family. Turner Williams married Maude Thompson of Springfield. Their two daughters were named Virginia and Norma Jean.

The home was later sold to William Wertheim of Springfield, who owns it at the present time. It is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Dale Woodrum.



Samuel Watkins Home

About four miles west of Petersburg, on the road to Atterberry, stands a beautifully maintained old home built by Samuel Watkins. Joseph and Nancy Greene Watkins were married in 1804 and came to Menard County from Clinton county in 1820, in a two-wheel cart, drawn by a yolk of oxen. They settled in the Little Grove neighborhood where Samuel Watkins, their youngest son was born. Here the family lived for many years in a log cabin.

Samuel Watkins married Miss Mary Woldridge of Menard county. When first married they lived in a log cabin in Mason county. They returned to Menard county in 1865, moving to his father's farm which he started farming. He started purchasing land and eventually became the owner of 3000 acres, some of the land having been purchased for \$6.00 an acre.

The house which they built stood back about 1/4 mile east of the present house, and was badly damaged by a cyclone in 1883. The front part of the house which remained undamaged, was moved to the present location, and this ten room house was built. Some of the woodwork in the front part of the house is bruised and dented as a result of the cyclone. For over 75 years a large wild grape vine has twined its way through lattice work at the rear of the house, forming a large shaded area.

Horse breeders and horse lovers came from all over the United States to this farm where horses were bred and trained. Here the famed horse, Peter McCue, founder of the Quarter Horse breed was bred and trained.

Mr. and Mrs. Watkins were the parents of eight children: Nettie, who married Z. A. Thompson; Elizabeth, who married Elijah Purvines of Pleasant Plains; Evans, who married Pauline Spears; Elias, who married Irene Fisher; Walter, who married Ollie Juhl; Edgar, who married Mae Onken of Chapin; Hattie, who married Christian Juhl; and Nona, who married Ira Abbott.

Samuel Watkins died in 1911 and his wife Mary Watkins in 1933.

For many years the home was owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Elias Watkins, and since Mr. Watkins death it has been occupied by Mrs. Elias Watkins.



Isaac White Home

One of the finest homes of Petersburg is this red brick house which was built by Isaac White in 1860. At that time the hill where the house stands was covered by timber.

Isaac White was born in Ithaca, New York in 1819. He came with his parents to Chandlerville, Illinois at the age of 12 years, the trip being made in a covered wagon through Chicago (which was then Fort Dearborn) in the year 1831. When they crossed Spring Creek, 6 miles west of Springfield, a band of Indians camped across the creek from them, numbering around 2000 warriors, besides women and children. The White family camped one night near the old mill at New Salem, then traveled on to Chandlerville where the father built a log house and started farming. At the age of 13 Isaac White would be sent by his father with a team of oxen to haul wheat to Beardstown.

In 1835 Isaac White was one of Lincoln's helpers in surveying the village of Petersburg.

In 1845 he was married near Chandlerville to Miss Sarah Ann Sutton. For a time they lived on a farm near the village but later moved to Robinson's Mill (Bobtown).

In 1849, during the gold rush to California, Isaac White decided to take a drove of cattle through, cattle selling at that time for a high price. Two wagons made the trip which took six months. There he remained a year and three months. When he left for home he had \$6000 in gold dust in a belt around his waist. He took a ship from the west coast to New York, going across the Isthmus of Panama. From New York he returned to Chicago by train.

Due to the death of some of their children at Robinson's Mill, which was attributed to dampness in that location, the family moved to Petersburg. For a time they lived at the Menard House, later moving to the house one block west of the square, which is now the Hurley Funeral Home.

Isaac White at one time was the owner of the entire east side of the square. After moving to Petersburg he entered the merchandise business, which was located on the west side of the square.

Mr. and Mrs. White were the parents of Jennie, who married Dr. Joseph Newcomer; Anna Marie, who married Charles T. Lewis; Hardin; Effie (Matte-son); Bertha, who married Edward Laning; and the children who died in infancy. The double wedding of Jennie and Anna occurred on December 5, 1867, in the living room of this house.

Mrs. White died in 1865. Later Mr. White was married to Miss Matilda Clark. Isaac White died in 1896 and Matilda White died in 1902.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. White, the house was owned and occupied for many years by Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Lewis. They were the parents of Effie (Bradley), Walker Lewis, who became treasurer of Sears Roebuck of Chicago, Lucy (Flickinger), Arthur, who was killed by a train in Chicago, Edna (Taylor), Dr. Ralston Lewis, Agnes (Luthringer), and Christine (Finney).

Today this charming old house is owned by a great-grandson of Isaac White, Arthur Finney and his wife, the former Louise Powers. They are the parents of three children: Patricia, Stephen and Keith.



521 W. Jackson Street, Petersburg

William White House

William W. White, builder of this house, was the son of Aaron B. White and Elizabeth Murray White. Aaron White was one of the pioneers of Clary's Grove, coming to this community from Kentucky. He operated a saw mill at Clary's Grove, coming from there to Petersburg. William White was the brother of Margaret Bennett (grandmother of Mrs. Harold Smoot and John Bennett), Nancy Smith (grandmother of Ben Axford), and Mary Degge (mother of A. R. Degge).

Aaron White was a carpenter and cabinet maker and built the old frame Presbyterian Church in 1842, a building which stood as a landmark for many years, being located on the first lot east of the present Standard Oil Station.

Around 1839-40, a Christian Church society was formed under the charge of Aaron White. This society continued for some years, receiving spiritual teachings from passing ministers. The meetings finally ceased after some of the older members died, but in 1862 the church was again organized under the influence of his son William White. When the new Christian Church was built in 1908, William White's son, A. T. White was awarded the contract to construct the new church.

William White was born near Lexington, Kentucky in 1824. He was married to Rebecca Perkins in 1846. William White was a contractor and many of the public and private buildings in Petersburg were erected by him. Rebecca Perkins White was born at New Salem. She knew Lincoln well when a child and watched his growth into eminence with pride.

The old log cabin in which Rebecca Perkins White lived at New Salem was moved to Petersburg when the former town site was abandoned, and later this same house was made a part of the new and commodious residence built by her husband in 1850. William White purchased the block of ground where this house is located from Abraham Goodpasture in 1849. The house faced north, with a brick walk extending to the street. Many Petersburg people will remember the veranda across the north side of the house. The log portion of the house is located to the northeast and today is used as a living room. In later years the house to the north was built by William White's grandson, Claire White and his wife Ethel.

Mr. and Mrs. William White were the parents of eleven children: Aaron Thomas; Dr. George White; John; Charles Harris; William Jr.; Henry Curtis; Anna E. and four children who died in childhood.

William White died in 1888. Mrs. White died in 1909 after occupying this house for over half a century.

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Watkins are now the owners and occupants of this home.



209 South Eighth Street, Petersburg

Henry Wernsing Home

The building of this majestic grey stone house was completed in 1902, and was a gift of Henry H. Marbold to his daughter Anna, who was the wife of Henry Wernsing. Bedford stone was used in this house, the stone being chipped and fashioned at the location. Standing at the outskirts of Greenview to the south and east, this house boasts twenty rooms. On the third floor is a large ballroom where many brilliant social affairs have been held by the past and present owners. Alkire Brothers, Greenview contractors, constructed this house.

Before moving to their new home, Mr. and Mrs. Wernsing occupied the house to the north, now occupied by Mrs. Harry Wernsing.

Henry Wernsing was born in Badbergen, Germany in 1859 and came to the United States in April 1888. He was married in September of the same year to Anna Marbold. After removing to Greenview Mr. Wernsing established a general merchandise and grocery store. Mr. and Mrs. Wernsing were the parents of five sons: Harry, who married Mabel Sisson; Otto, who married Helen Sudbrink; Rudolph; and two sons who died in childhood.

Mr. Wernsing's death occurred in 1917. Mrs. Wernsing continued to live in this home for several years, eventually moving to Springfield. In 1937 the home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Miller of Chicago who were former Greenview residents, Mrs. Miller being the former Mae Blane, daughter of Edward and Louise Tourine Blane. Mr. Blane was the son of Abner Blane, and a descendant of the Blane family which settled in Irish Grove in 1820, said to be the first white persons who lived in the Irish Grove community.

Carl Miller was born in Ronne, Bornholm, Denmark, the son of Hans Peter Miller and Sophia Hallberg Miller, and came to the United States in 1883 when he was a year old. At an early age he entered newspaper work in Springfield and later joined several newspapers in Chicago. In connection with his work he devoted much time working for various Masonic groups. In 1923-24 he served as Sovereign Prince of Chicago Council Princes of Jerusalem, and in 1939-40 he was Commander-in-Chief of Oriental Consistory. He received his 33 Degree in 1922 and was elected an active member of the Supreme Council of 33 Degree in 1940. He served as Grand Marshal General of Supreme Council from 1944-63 and was Potentate of Medinah Temple in 1936. Mr. and Mrs. Miller were in attendance at every meeting of the Supreme Council from 1944 until 1963.



Dr. Whitley Home

Coming to Petersburg in 1879, Dr. James D. Whitley built this brick home at 405 S. Seventh Street. The lines of this sturdy ten-room house have been changed very little. The present owners built a new kitchen to the west, and a Victorian veranda was removed from the east of the house and replaced by a modern porch. The sun room to the east and south has been unchanged. At the roof line of the sun room are etched glass windows with a bird design, bordered on all sides by colored glass.

James D. Whitley, physician and surgeon, was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England in 1844. He came to America with his parents in 1846, locating in New York city. His mother died of cholera during the 1849 epidemic. In 1857, at the age of twelve, he was brought to Logan county where he was apprenticed to a farmer. He joined the Union Army during the Civil War, but because of his early age would only be accepted as a drummer boy. He was later placed in charge of a dispensary, acting as assistant surgeon in charge of the guard house until his discharge in 1865. He attended lectures at Rush Medical College, then came to Menard county and opened an office in Petersburg. Six months later he moved to Robinson's Mill (Bobtown). In 1879 he returned to Petersburg where he practiced medicine until his retirement.

Dr. Whitley was married four times. His first wife was Elizabeth Watkins, who died in Oakford. His second wife was Emma C. Haynes, who died in 1890. They were the parents of three children: Ida and Albert who died in childhood and James D. Whitley. His third wife was Sarah Virginia Degge, and they were the parents of one son, Langdon D. Whitley. In 1904 Dr. Whitley was married to Miss Elizabeth Rourke, who survived him. Dr. Whitley died in 1914.

The house was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Gurrad. Mr. Gurrad was a photographer, and Mrs. Gurrad was the former Mary Bennett, daughter of Dr. Richard Bennett.

Mr. and Mrs. John Eilers owned and occupied the house for several years, and following Mr. Eilers death, the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Menichetti. Mr. Menichetti operated a meat market for several years, and eventually the store was enlarged and turned into a super market. They were the parents of six children: Henry Jr. who died in childhood; Primo, Savina, Eda, Frank and William. The home is now occupied by the Misses Savina and Eda Menichetti and their brother Frank Menichetti and his daughter Miss Lois.



Willson House

One of the old landmarks of Tallula is the Willson home, which stands at North Elm Street. The house was built by Dr. John Ferguson Willson when he practiced medicine in Tallula. Dr. Willson was the first practicing physician in the village of Tallula, and it is thought the house was built in 1884.

Dr. Willson who was born in 1830, started practicing medicine in Tallula in 1858. After enlisting and serving in the infantry during the Civil War, he returned to Tallula where he started a grocery and hardware business. He later became associated with William G. Greene in the banking business. The bank was known as the Willson & Greene Bank, which was later known as the Farmers & Merchants State Bank. Dr. Willson also owned a great deal of land around Tallula.

Dr. Willson married Miss Sarah Margaret Crum of Virginia, and they were the parents of seven children: Oscar; Frank; Howard, who was educated in Europe, and sang in grand opera in the United States as well as Europe; Charles; Royal; Clara, who married Dr. Shasted of Pittsfield; and Millie who died in infancy.

Dr. Willson's death occurred in 1915, and Mrs. Willson died in 1921. Their remains rest in Greenwood cemetery, west of Tallula.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. Willson, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Ayers became owners of the house. The Ayers occupied this home for many years. They were the parents of one son, Arthur.

The house is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Basso.





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